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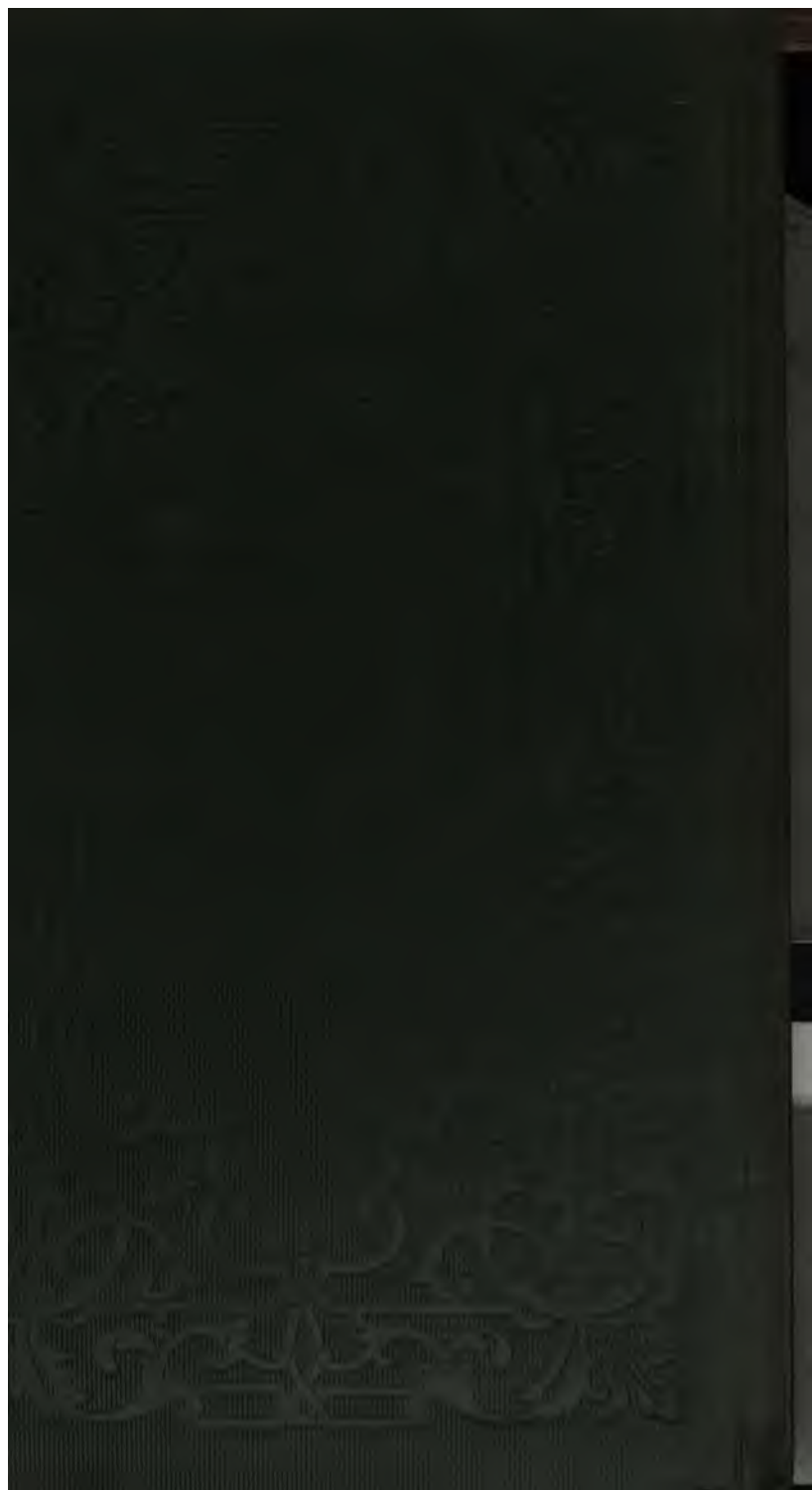
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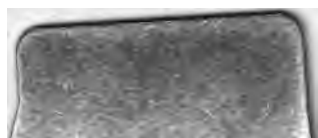
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# THE CONFESSOR.

A NOVEL

“The renegade,  
On whose base brutal nature unredeem'd,  
Even black apostacy itself could stamp  
No deeper reprobation.”

SOUTHEY'S BODERICK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# THE CONFESSOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

O England!—Model to thy inward greatness  
Like little body, with a mighty heart,—  
What might'st thou do, that honour would thee do,  
Were all thy children kind and natural!  
But see thy fault. France hath in thee found out  
A nest of hollow bosoms, which he fills  
With treacherous crowns.—SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V.*

ON the close of a beautiful autumnal day, in the year 1640, the sun was setting on the Scottish borders with more than his usual brilliancy, and shedding on wood, bank, and river, the harmony of Nature's hues, and the tranquillity of Nature's voiceless imagery. But throughout the two countries which this peaceful scene divided, the trumpet call of faction had already sounded; and the



sword was unsheathed, which was not suffered to rest, till the hands that wielded it had consummated the sorrow and shame of the land that could arm her sons against each other, by turning its point, even unto the death, against her anointed Monarch.

King Charles, with his attendants, at this time lay at York, engaged in that ill-omened attempt at accommodation with the insurgent Scots, which terminated so fruitlessly. It served but to exasperate the intemperate zeal of the Covenanters, amongst whom were doubtless many who were sincere in the expression of their fears, as regarded the attempt of Charles to impose upon them a liturgy ; while the greater number, guided only by ambition and love of independence, together with that hatred of superior power, so fitly placed in the mouth of him who deemed it "better to reign in hell than serve in heaven"—took advantage of pious scruples, founded on ignorance and fanaticism, to identify the cause of religion with that of the covenant: to render their zeal for God himself, the pretext for rebellion against their sovereign.

At the commencement of these troubles, several

of the Scottish nobles, firmly attached to the king and his government, had been induced to lend their support to what seemed to them but a just claim on the part of a nation to regulate her own church, and resist foreign dictation; and when the violences to which their party had recourse compelled the Government also to resort to arms, these nobles were apt, in the excitement of the period, to justify themselves for their countenance of rebellion, under the plea that they were oppressed sufferers for the truth, simply defending themselves from the compulsory establishment of idolatry.

Yet, there had been a lingering repugnance to strike the first blow:—that blow which must stamp them for ever as traitors to their king; and many were the negotiations, many the petitions for redress, which preceded the outbreak of popular resentment. Charles had yielded to the representations of his subjects, to an extent that any of his predecessors would have deemed incredible; and his concessions only produced demands the more unreasonable and presumptuous, as indicative of a want of power on his part to enforce his previous decrees.

Still, when negotiation had seemingly ceased, and petitions were at an end, there had been, as we have said, amongst all who valued their country, her laws, and her liberties, an almost insurmountable reluctance to strike the first blow.

At the period, however, where our narrative commences, the action at Newburn had taken place; and the main body of the Scotch army, after the taking of Newcastle, was on the point of advancing upon the royal party, well organized and ably commanded. At this crisis, the King consented to treat with the insurgents, and himself proceeded to York for the purpose.

All travelling on the frontiers of the two countries was, of course, extremely precarious; and, as at this early period of the great struggle, the costumes which afterwards pre-eminently distinguished the contending parties, had not been decidedly adopted, men often fell into error and danger, from the difficulty of discerning friends from foes.

It was, then, as the last rays of the sun were reflected from the silver waters of the Tweed, that two travellers arrived at a small hostelry on its banks. The long range of the Cheviot Hills

terminated within a few hundred paces of their halting-place, and on its last eminence were picturesquely situated the decaying remains of a small chapel, long desecrated. The building, in the anti-papal fury of later times, had been abandoned to the use of the neighbouring shepherds, who were accustomed to kindle there a beacon light, when the deep snows of the northern winter rendered all traces of the surrounding country indiscernible.

In the dress or equipage of the traveller or his attendant, there was none of that display which distinguished the cavaliers of the period; neither, on the other hand, could there have been detected in the smallest degree, a forced affectation of plainness. But the remark which must have first struck an observer, with regard to the foremost horseman, was his singular grace in riding, and the perfect subjection, in which, without any apparent effort, he held the high-blooded animal on which he was mounted. Little of his figure was distinguishable, until, arriving at the gate of the paved court which fronted the hostelry, he threw aside his tartan travelling-cloak, and, dismounting, cast the bridle to his attendant.

The stranger was of the middle height, or, perhaps, something more; but his limbs were so exquisitely proportioned, as to give indication of great physical strength. His countenance was noble and manly, and the glance of his eyes, the colour of which inclined to grey, was piercing in no common degree. The nose was high and rather aquiline, with the curved nostril, which adds so greatly to expression in the human countenance; and his lips, the upper of which was shaded by a short moustache, were full, and firmly set together. The colour of the hair, which fell in clusters around his head and neck, was a rich dark brown, verging on the auburn; his complexion, naturally light, was tinged by exposure to sun and weather, and his colour varied rapidly with the emotion of the moment. Altogether, his carriage and deportment conveyed that idea which his contemporaries expressed by the term "princely."

He wore a doublet of dark coloured velvet, entirely unadorned; his only weapon being a Spanish rapier, which hung from a splendid baldric. The falling band at the throat and the cuffs were of plain linen. A rich satin hatband

encircled his high crowned beaver, but the usual plume of feathers had been laid aside. His age might be thirty or upwards, and it required no second glance to convince the beholder that to him the game of life was no novelty; and that his years, whatever their number, had yielded their full harvest of incident and vicissitude.

“How callest thou this tavern, dame?” said he to the hostess, who, in haste to welcome a guest of so different a caste from her usual customers, was advancing from the door to receive him.

The woman pointed to a sign-post which stood in front of the court, and answered with a deep-drawn and very audible sigh, “This poor house, master, takes its name from yonder godly man, of blessed memory.”

The traveller raised his clear, penetrating eyes in the direction of the sign-post. The board which hung thereon, painted on both sides, exhibited the figure of a tall, emaciated man, dressed in a suit of black originally, (which had, however, been tastefully varied with sundry trimmings,) who was standing in what appeared to be a beer cask, or barrel, which reached nearly up to his middle. Around and about the butt were groups

of small figures, white, black, and brown; of which one was elevated pre-eminently above the rest, and was also considerably their superior in dimension, so that they presented some analogy in appearance to a hen and chickens. The figure in the cask was throwing out his arms with great ease and freedom.

“Is it Diogenes?” said the stranger, when he had thrown a cursory glance upon the picture.

“Alack! no—master; no such wicked thing. As if an honest woman would call her house by an awfu’ papistical name like that! Woe is me! that I should have lived to see the day when the pious and learned John Knox, preaching to Queen Mary and all her court, should be taken for a Popish idolatry!”

“I beg the Reformer’s pardon, and to make him amends, I will lodge in his house, which I perceive is the one I was in search of, for the night. Is this the way to the parlour, good dame?” And without waiting for reply from his mystified hostess, the traveller walked forward towards the room allotted to visitors of a better order than those who commonly frequented the outer apartment of the little hostelry.

Here, on entering, he found that he was not alone. Close to the open lattice of a window, which admitted the last rays of the setting sun, sate a youth whose intensely thoughtful and somewhat melancholy expression of countenance interested the stranger at once, accustomed as was the latter to every variety of character and condition. Apparently engrossed in deep reflection, the youth remained motionless, his face buried in his hands; yet one glance upwards as the traveller entered sufficed to display the full dark eye, the firm decision of the mouth, slightly relaxed as a salutation passed between the visitors, and the pale forehead and cheeks, with the marked brows.

Notwithstanding these characteristics, an ordinary eye would have detected nothing in the appearance of the silent and unobtrusive youth under its observation, with his chequered mantle buckled round him, his kilt of common grey woollen, and his blue cap, surmounted by a sprig of holly, lying beside him, beyond that of a country lad in quest of pasturage for his flocks, or perhaps bound on an expedition to win the heart of some Northumbrian maiden.



Such, however, was not the impression which our traveller received, on having obtained a second view of his companion's countenance, by a slight remark, which of course elicited a reply. After this the younger guest relapsed into his reverie.

Which of us has not felt the constraint and difficulty of that position, which places us in contact with an individual, whose manner and appearance excite our interest, and whose reserve we feel that it were a kindness to overcome, while we ourselves are liable to the imputation of obtrusiveness in attempting to urge his confidence !

Impelled by an unaccountable sympathy, and by an impression that he had somewhere met his companion before ; actuated also by a desire to penetrate the disguise in which he believed him to be enveloped, the elder traveller advanced towards the window, and addressed him in a friendly tone.

" I know not," said he, " whether this scene be more familiar to thee than to myself ; but if it be so, perhaps thou canst tell me the name and purpose of yonder tower."

" It is the ruined chapel of St. Stephen, which you see yonder," replied the youth, without allud-

ing to the former part of the question ; “ and since the late troubles, has been used, I believe, as a military post of observation.”

At the mention of the chapel of St. Stephen, the other gave a quick glance from the casement ; but pursuing his inquiry, he resumed,—

“ And previously to the late troubles, was the chapel used for worship ? Pardon the inquiry if impertinent, but, from your apparent interest in the scene, I should guess that this is not your first visit to the spot ? ”

At the period of our story, a question involving even remotely the furiously disputed questions of faith or mode of worship, so interwoven in the minds of men with those localities in which they had been celebrated, might also involve much personal risk and danger. This the youth well knew, and regarding the querist with a look of quiet scrutiny, he answered,—

“ My recollections of this spot are so very remote, that I am at a loss to give them form or consistency, even to myself ; and you will pardon me, if my intercourse with the world, limited as it has been, together with the present state of parties, has rendered me cautious of placing confidence in

strangers ; though, in truth, your bearing would appear to warrant it. But my story concerns others as well as myself, and there is that in your countenance which assures me you were not the man to counsel to a breach of trust, even though the trust be but implied."

" Well, keep thy secret, good youth ; and since thou wilt not aid me in my researches amongst these Cheviot Hills, I must needs explore them for myself."

So saying, the traveller wrapped himself in his tartan, and wandered forth in the now dusky evening, following the direction of the chapel. A circuitous path, winding round the hill from the foot to the summit, and passing on its way a small rustic cottage, led to the porch of the deserted building. As the footsteps of the stranger rang upon its pavement, and the hollow echo repeated the clanking sound, he felt, for an instant, startled. But soon all other impressions were lost in the absorbing interest of the scene he sought.

Reclining against the rudely-carved stone which had been the altar in former days, her pale face and long dark tresses more strikingly contrasted by the reflection of the yellow light which beamed

through a remnant of stained glass in the southern window, stood a young girl, whose attitude and whole appearance, but for the tears which moistened her cheeks and lashes, might have betokened a statue rather than a human being. She started on the entrance of the traveller, and hastily collecting her mantle and hood, she advanced mechanically; then stopped, as if uncertain. On gaining a glimpse of his countenance, she uttered an ejaculation of surprise and consternation.

“Now may Heaven aid us!” she exclaimed. “Oh! tell me, what brought you here?”

“‘My horse, my love, my horse,’” replied he, gaily. “But why so pale and terrified, my Margaret? My presence was not wont to make thee tremble, nor to chase the roses from those cheeks. When last we met, they gathered but the deeper tint at my approach.”

“Oh, Graham!” replied she, “why have you betrayed me into this? I knew not even that you were in Britain, and was prepared for a far different interview. But no, time must be lost. Fly for your life, as you love me, or have ever loved me, fly; for my uncle, your mortal enemy,

meets me here this night, and I look for his instant arrival."

"First satisfy me, dearest one, that Graham is still to thee all that once he was; and then let his deadliest foe appear: he were right welcome."

"Alas!" she said, "those days of hope and happiness were but a dream, and it has passed away. The sentence of fate has gone forth against us, and mark me, Graham, we may not be united—nay, more, after this night we must never meet again."

"And what power on earth shall divide us?" said the cavalier; "I had almost said what power in Heaven?"

"And there you would have erred," she answered; "for it is the will of Heaven we should part. In me you love a devoted follower of the Church of Rome."

Surprised for the moment, but not confounded, he replied in a light tone:

"And for thy sake I would love the Church of Rome itself—ay, or of Constantinople either. But tell me, Margaret," he added, after an instant's reflection, "tell me, I entreat thee, the story thou hast hitherto withheld from me. Who

is this uncle, my enemy, as thou affirmest, and thy own, if I may guess by thy dread of his approach."

"First say," she answered, as desirous to delay the intelligence—"say how you received warning that I was to meet him here to night: an appointment I believed secret from all but himself."

"I was directed hither by an old beldame, whom I encountered last night as I was taking advantage of the clear moonlight to speed my way towards the Borders, in fulfilment of the commission with which my country has intrusted me, for treating with his Majesty at York. The weird woman bade me inquire in this direction for the deserted chapel of St. Stephen; and there, at the hour of sunset, she promised that I should meet thee. Though little of a convert to the popular faith in inspirations, judge, my Margaret, whether this unsought warning, however repugnant to probability, could be thrown away."

"What was she like, this prophetess?" inquired Margaret, "and did she tell you more?"

"Simply what I have related, excepting that she promised to announce by a signal when her wisdom should deem fit that I should leave thee.

In her general appearance there *was* little to distinguish her from any other countrywoman, though her accent was slightly foreign. In her conduct perhaps, rather more, for she persisted in refusing at my hand the small gratuity which her sweet pronunciation of thy name had won her."

"Strange!" observed the maiden, musingly—"such a person I met but two days since in traversing the lowlands; and it was on the evening of her accosting me that I lost the despatches, the failure of which causes me to dread my uncle's anger,—awful indeed his anger is!"

"Do not fear it, beloved," replied he. "This benevolent enchantress may find means to keep thy relation at a distance, as she has already discovered marvellous skill in bringing us together. But, be the event as it may, with me at thy side, what hast thou to dread? Probably, too, thou over-ratest both his power and his malice. But enough of this;—I have satisfied *thy* inquiry, I pray thee, Margaret, delay no longer to answer *mine*."

"It is hard to me to tell thee, Graham, that even thy presence will not protect me:—that for the safety of both, this last sad, sweet, interview


must terminate. To be brief; thou hast known me hitherto but as Marguerite d'Amville, the name which I bore at the court of France: it was my mother's; and the Lord Cardinal insisted that, with her large inheritance, her name should also descend to me. My father, a Protestant, and a Scotchman, had died some time before. That dear father—he was, Graham, the brother of your enemy, the Marquis of Hamilton!”

“Of Hamilton?” repeated her lover, “and he is to meet thee here to-night?”

“Even so,” she said, “and here he expects me to deliver to him letters from the Cardinal de Richelieu, intrusted to me, on my quitting France, by my uncle's desire.”

“The traitor!” muttered the cavalier. “And thou, Margaret, thou hast suffered thyself to be made the medium in this treacherous correspondence?”

“Alas! more probably its victim,” she replied; “but the letters, as I told you, have been stolen from my charge. I have long believed that, respecting myself, some sinister design existed, in which the writer and receiver of these letters were agreed. No sooner had you quitted Paris





than I received from Richelieu an arbitrary command to discontinue all correspondence with you, together with a hint, couched in terms of advice, that the French king would consent to my alliance with none but a French subject. A harsh letter followed from my uncle, the Lord Hamilton, confirming this prohibition of your suit. Judge, then, of the danger of our lingering together."

"Of that presently, beloved one. But wherefore art thou now in Britain? What scheme have these two wily statesmen in making thee their envoy?"

Margaret hesitated, but at length, in a voice half stifled by grief, she replied, "You have the right to ask that question, and I will tell you all, though I would gladly have been spared the recital of the particulars it involves, above all to *you*. Our parting, Graham—dost thou remember it?—was rendered sadder by the ignorance in which my surviving parent remained, that we were pledged to each other. Fearing to increase the malady which was consuming her, I withheld all intelligence which might cause emotion, and hoped, from day to day, that her recovery would

put an end to my enforced reserve. I greatly erred, but I have greatly suffered. The crisis of the disease arrived, and left me an orphan, my secret untold, and myself bound by a promise which prevented me from having recourse to the protector who now was all the world to me. Thus, though highly allied and richly endowed, I was more desolate than the poorest maiden, who, with a pure faith and a clear conscience, may give her hand to the companion of her daily labour. This solemn promise,—dare I tell it you?—it was, that I would never wed a Protestant. Forgive me, pity me, and reflect that the request of a dying parent brooks no denial.—I gave the pledge.

“ She told me how through life calamity had pursued herself, in consequence of her union with a heretic. Persecuted by his family, she and my father had sought peace in the shelter of these hills, and for some years they dwelt in the cottage you passed in your ascent hither. At this altar my sainted mother daily offered her devotions, and here she taught me the doctrines and worship of the true church, since, in more populous districts, the open celebration of the Mass exposed—but—blessed Mary!—what means that?—the

appointed signal—doubtless!—and you must go.—You know the worst.—Farewell!”

Her exclamation was caused by the sudden appearance, on a point of the hill opposite to that on which they stood, of a bright meteoric light, which shot high into the air, and remained burning steadily and brilliantly, so that its rays penetrated even the little chapel on the neighbouring eminence. The latter was separated only by a deep but very narrow ravine, from the summit on which the beacon was kindled, so that in the darkness, which was now setting in, a traveller might, without some such guide, mistake the one for the other.

The cavalier regarded the beacon attentively for a few seconds, then spoke.

“It may be as thou sayest, dearest, the token that I should leave thee; but, unprotected as thou art, I carry by my side a surer token that I should stay. Besides, if Hamilton be on his way, this beacon, whatever be its purport, must perplex him, perhaps mislead. So use the precious moments, dear one, and finish thy tale, already too long—or too short.”

The trembling girl still urged the peril of

prolonging the interview, and besought him to depart.

At length, soothed by his arguments and entreaties, she resumed her story; but she spoke rapidly and with less connectedness.

“My father, did I tell thee? perished at Rochelle. He was wearied of inaction, and disappointed in his hope of making my mother a convert to his creed, and in consequence he joined that ill-fated enterprise which offered employment to his ardent spirit. Thus we were in the power of his elder brother, whose malice against my mother took the colour of zeal against popery, until his persecutions drove her to seek refuge once more in France. The reason of this ungenerous conduct on the part of the Marquis of Hamilton was, as I have heard, an ancient grudge which he bore her for slighting his addresses, in favour of those of his younger brother, during her residence at the court of Henrietta Maria. The king interfered, contrary to his custom with regard to the foreign attendants of the queen, and endeavoured to advance the pretensions of the Marquis; and my mother’s final choice caused the sovereign’s displeasure, and the exile of both her

her and my father from court. Of the events of my mother's life previously to her marriage I know nothing, for she forbade all allusion to them. She was, however, as she herself informed me when circumstances compelled us to adopt the title, an heiress of the house of d'Amville; and she frequently spoke of some individual as my future protector, though it appeared she dared not to reveal to me his name. Here, then, is my calamity. In the conflict between conscience and motherly love, she gave me this jewel, which forms, as you see, the half of a clasp, with the assurance, which even then trembled on her lips, that if I met with him who owned the corresponding jewel, forming the other half, he had a right to my affection and confidence. What that right is, I know not.

“Thus, when recently pressed by the French minister to an alliance which was intended to enrich one of his creatures, I obeyed the harsh summons of my guardian, Lord Hamilton, to return and place myself under his protection. Richelieu suffered my departure; perhaps as an unsuspected medium for the conveyance of his letters to my uncle,—perhaps also partly as re-

lying on Lord Hamilton's promises to compel my acquiescence in his views.

"And now, Graham, this has been a long tale and a sad one—but you would have it. Think but of Margaret henceforth as one who once loved you, and charge her, if you will, with weakness, with superstition, with folly—with anything but fickleness. And now we must say farewell for ever."

"That will we never do—no, Margaret.—I swear by all that is sacred, that as long as we both live, unless you should have vowed fidelity to another, never will I cease to entreat, to implore you not to sacrifice your own peace and mine to a false scruple; for no subsequent promise can annul the vows you made to me—and to a mistaken duty; for the confessor, and not your dying parent, was probably the originator of that request. As to this other individual, whoever he be, he cannot have the right to your confidence that I have—your accepted, your affianced husband. Tell me of a claim on earth equal to that, and I release you."

"The claims of my conscience, of my faith, of the Holy Church, forbid that I should satisfy

yours," she said. "Oh! tempt me not, tempt me not to enter into that most sacred of all engagements without the hallowed influence of a parent's blessing, and against the solemn voice of the Holy Church. Leave me—oh, leave me!"

"In darkness and in danger, and alone!" exclaimed he. And on the instant his words seemed verified, for while he spoke, the beacon, which had hitherto burned equally and steadily, fell, extinguished on the sudden; and all around relapsed into gloom.

Margaret shuddered, and faltering, laid her hand on the strong arm of her lover for support; whilst heavy footsteps were heard advancing towards the porch, and in another instant two men entered the building.

One of them struck a light, which enabled the lovers to recognize the foremost as the Marquis of Hamilton. His companion, who held the torch, was a mean and ordinary looking man, with dark and sinister features: he wore the dress of a friar of the Dominican order, which served but poorly, however, to cover the vulgarity of his demeanour or the low cunning of his countenance.

Lord Hamilton, on entering, immediately strode

forward to the spot where stood his pale and trembling niece supported by his well known foe. As he approached, she fell prostrate at his feet, exclaiming, in the impulse of excited terror,—  
“Revenge yourself on me, but spare him.”

Involuntarily the cavalier drew out his rapier; but Hamilton, after collecting himself in a fearful pause, which seemed to carry life or death for all present, retreated a few paces, and laying aside his weapon, smiled that bitter smile which conveys, more surely than the fiercest words, the presage of misery and ruin.

“Methinks,” said he, “amongst friends and relatives, these weapons can be of little service. I give thee good even, Earl of Montrose. Our sovereign liege the king hath looked for thee at York these two days, impatient for thy proposals from his rebel subjects. Knowest thou of news?”

“Of none with which your lordship is not already probably better acquainted than myself,” answered the Earl of Montrose, for it was he. “But strange news indeed I shall have to relate should I longer behold the Marquis of Hamilton an unmoved spectator of this fair girl’s distress. Methinks the



parental authority which he affects, if not his courtesy, might teach a bearing something more humane than thus to suffer her to kneel at his feet unnoticed. Margaret, I entreat thee, rise, and remember thou owest no duty to this gentleman, save as his conduct merits it."

The marquis again smiled.

"My niece has doubtless already profited by your lordship's well known eloquence upon the subject of duties—religious and moral. Nevertheless, in case her Romanist principles of passive obedience should yield before your superior light, I will furnish her with an argument which may, perhaps, be equally appreciated by both. Margaret Hamilton," and his brow gathered darkness as he spoke, "I have but to say the word, and thou art reduced from the proud heiress of the house of Amville, to a beggared dependant on that of Hamilton. But enough,—I am so far from intending, or even contemplating, such a course, that I intend to place thee at the Court of England, where I have already bespoken for thee the grace and favour of Henrietta: and this holy man, Father Jacopo, is the confessor and guide I have promised for thee. This night you set forward. But where is thy nurse—is she not of thy company?"

“ Your commands, my uncle, were that I should meet you here alone. My nurse attends me at the cottage below.”

“ I am beholden to thee for thy strict obedience. And was it as a further mark of duty thou didst cause yonder false beacon to be kindled?” said the Lord Hamilton.

“ The Holy Virgin and the saints be my witness!” responded Margaret, “ I know nought of the beacon; neither was I aware, as you seem to suspect, until the past hour, of the Lord of Montrose’s presence here this night. I am ready to depart at your pleasure ; but oh ! my uncle, tax not my obedience to the accepting of such a guide!”

Margaret glanced at the Dominican as she spoke, with an expression of fear and disgust : but Hamilton, who had turned away, and appeared to be leaving the chapel, took no notice of her request. Suddenly, as if struck by a recollection, he stopped, and, again addressing her, said, in a careless tone,

“ Thou didst tell me, as I think, thou wert the bearer of letters from my lady cousins. So engrossed am I in war and politics, I had forgotten to demand them at thy hand.”

The terrified girl commanded herself sufficiently to relate the fate of the correspondence with which she had been charged. To her surprise, Hamilton remained mute ; and on its conclusion, abruptly desiring her to prepare for her journey, he beckoned the Dominican, and accompanied by him, instantly left the chapel.

Montrose, who had shared Margaret's repugnance to the escort provided for her, was yet alive to the advantages of her gaining the protection of the Queen ; and, since his own post as envoy to treat with the royal party at York, rendered his personal attendance on her a measure to be adopted only as a last resort, his thoughts wandered in search of a substitute.

In the absence of more accredited agents, and under the necessity of immediately providing for the case, it occurred to him, that the youth whom he had left at the little inn, whose countenance and bearing had inspired him with a confidence inexplicable even to himself, might possibly be induced to attend the progress of the party to London, waiting on their movements at a distance, and keeping a strict watch upon the conduct of the Dominican.

## CHAPTER II.

I am a lone stray thing, whose little life,  
By strangers' bounty cherished,—like a wave  
That from the summer sea a wanton breeze  
Lifts for a moment's sparkle—will subside,  
Light as it rose, nor heave a sigh in breaking.

TALFOURD'S ION.

WE now return to the little apartment of the hostelry, where our readers will recollect we left the youth, to whom Montrose's thoughts had reverted in quest of a guardian for his fair affianced, during her route towards the Court of Queen Henrietta, then resident at Whitehall. The design of the young nobleman in this proceeding was merely to appoint a distant surveillance upon the proceedings of the party, which might be available at need. Fate, however, had ordered the matter otherwise.

Montrose had not long quitted the cottage,

before its rustic porch was darkened by the figure of a woman, whose appearance, strange as it was, seemed rather to excite reverence and fear, than either curiosity or astonishment amongst the inmates of the hut. Though wrinkled in countenance, and emaciated in figure, she appeared worn rather by exposure to weather and by inordinate fatigues, than by old age. Her eye yet retained its brilliancy, and her regular and white teeth, together with her dark locks, as yet but slightly touched with grey, which waved wildly from underneath her hood, gave the seeming of premature old age to the deep lines of the brow, and the almost scorched and withered brownness of the skin; whilst her active and well-turned figure suggested not for a moment the idea of decrepitude or infirmity.

As she entered the porch, the hostess whispered her guests with some signs of uneasiness, "It is the prophetess;\* speak her fair, I charge

\* The original of this character was a woman of the name of Nicholson, mentioned in Hume as an esteemed prophetess amongst the Covenanters. She was accustomed to speak only at intervals, and had interruptions of days and weeks. A popular preacher, named Rolls, being requested to pray for her, replied "That he durst not, and that it would be ill manners in him to speak, while his master, Christ, was speaking in her."

ye, for, by her mien, I see the spirit is on her, and none knoweth like her the times and the seasons. Even the proud Scotch lords are fain to seek her counsel, and that great apostle of the covenant, the Rev. Shimei Haman, speaks not in her presence, but as she lists."

Then, turning to the doorway, where stood the object of this special communication, she addressed her by the title she knew most to conciliate her.

"Good even to thee, Deborah: all hail! We lack thy counsel, good mother, for this even,—ay, but now a gallant hath alighted here, and asked lodging for the night. And his groom and steed abide here, while he himself hath hastened with all speed to yonder hill. But, alack, good mother, my heart already smites me for according him a shelter, though he be a fair spoken and comely gentleman; for, by his outward man, I judge that he is one of the ungodly,—ay, a very Sisera, clad in the abominations of the heathen, and his speech bewrayeth him as belonging to the idolators. Say, shall we take the hammer and the nail, like unto Jael, or shall we bind him hand and foot, and deliver him over to the army

of the faithful? Surely thou art guided hither by the Spirit to direct us in this matter."

Now the hostess of the "John Knox," previously to the entrance of the prophetess, had not dreamed for an instant of molesting her guest, and, so long as her reckoning was sure, she still harboured not the smallest intention of interfering with his entertainment or abode in her house; but the fear that Ninon, for such was the real name of the person whom the fanatics profanely designated as Deborah, should condemn her for harbouring any guests unfavourable to the covenant, had induced her to proffer this zealous effusion, in order to anticipate her visitor's accusation.

"Fool, that thou art!" replied the woman, "would'st thou cut off the defence and glory of the holy covenant! I tell thee, woman, use him with all honour and respect, for he is a very Sampson for our Israel, and if thou would'st display thy zeal in the righteous cause, let not another day pass, ere thou dismiss thy younger son, Brian Ellsie, to join the ranks of the faithful against the tyrant."

The rustic youth, thus abruptly summoned to warfare, started from his seat, aghast at her

words, and his mother was about to commence an expostulation; but Ninon,—having by her concluding sentences gained the end she sought, namely, the entire absorption of this interesting family in their own affairs,—hastily proceeded to the inner room.

On her entrance, its occupant started up with an expression of surprise and apprehension, “What, once again, Ninon, do we meet?”

“Ay, once, and twice, and thrice, for aught I know, before the end comes,” said she; “but,” pointing to the window, “the sun shines red to-night.”

“A truce to this mystery, good Ninon. Thou knowest witchery and second-sight impose not on me, neither these senseless ravings, by which thou mayest awe the minds of the weak. Tell me, I entreat thee, and in all plainness, what is thy errand?”

“Is there not a cause for mystery?” replied the woman, “and is it for thee to mock at inspiration? Beware how thou speakest lightly of that on which thy own destiny depends.”

“And what may that be, good mother? for fain would I treat it with becoming reverence.”



“Foolish boy! canst thou then find no subject of jest but thy own future fortunes? Now mark me, and listen with faith, or listen not at all.”

“With respect, Ninon, to all that thou shalt utter, but with faith in an idle prophecy, if such it be, I cannot.”

“Yet shalt thou, Albert—for thy infant ear caught its tones, ere yet thy own feeble voice was heard; and thy infant lips learned to utter it, as their first attempt at language.”

“A reason why I should *remember*, but not *believe* it.”

“Wise lips have uttered it, crowned heads have listened to it; and thou, presumptuous boy, if thou hast forgotten the charm of thy nativity, was it not that amongst thy companions for the hour the secret would have brought upon thee scorn and scoffing. But the time is arrived when thou must learn it anew, for the die is cast,—the hour approaches,—already is one noose in the web of thy destiny unravelled,—the rest shall follow:—hear then.”

The woman proceeded to repeat the following doggrel; her eyes fixed upon the casement, as if she expected its instant and literal fulfilment.

“ Quand du sang  
Le soleil pleuvra,  
Alors ton rang  
Tu retrouveras.” \*

“ On this hangs thy fate, Albert Lyndesay. In expectation of its fulfilment, I have watched thee and thy fortunes by day and by night. If I have deceived these canting fools with their own hypocritical jargon it is for thy sake. Power—the power to serve thee has been my object. I have told thee thou should'st never see me, save when some change was impending o'er thee in heart or fortune. Thou art now on thy way to join King Charles at York!”

Albert Lyndesay, for by this name he had been previously known, remained buried in thought during the delivery of this rhapsodical speech, and it was some time after its conclusion that he answered:

“ I am, indeed, good mother, intending to throw myself upon the favour and protection of the King for my future fortunes. Wearied of a

\* Which may be thus rendered:—

“ When the sun on earth  
Sheds a bloody shower,  
The star of thy birth  
Shall regain its power.”

life of dependence, and ever cherishing the remembrance of his Majesty's most gracious notice on the one occasion when my patron deigned to make me a medium of a negociation with his sovereign, I would willingly use that indulgence which then, I own, so much surprised me, as a plea for entreating further confidence. My only hope of advancement is through faithful service, and so long as I have a sword to wield, my sovereign shall command it, though if my birth must remain a secret until thy marvel shall find fulfilment, be its meaning what it may, I fear me, Albert Lyndesay must die as he has lived, unknown and unregarded."

"Say not 'unknown and unregarded,'" replied the woman, "for thou art known where no mean lineage hath record—ay, and there is one whom I may not name, who deigns to interest himself in thy fate. Of myself I speak not: it were vain to tell thee, for thou couldst not comprehend—how great, how measureless must have been the love of her who forsook her own babe to preserve thy tender life, who gave thee that place in her bosom her own child should have filled—leaving her offspring to—alas! thou, O God, only knowest to

what! who even now exists but in expectation of the moment——”

“Pardon me, my kind friend,” said the youth, who, alarmed by her excited manner and vehement expression, believed her to be labouring under some mental delusion, and therefore judged it wiser gently to lead her from the subject; “pardon me, if in aught I have said my thoughtlessness hath wounded thee; but let us leave speaking on the subject of my future destiny, and doubt not that He, whom the winds and the sea obey, will order the events of my future life as shall best promote His purposes of mercy and goodness. In Him we will confide. But one word before we quit the theme; hath it never occurred to thee that thy prophecy, spoken in the French tongue, but ill befits a native Scot? trust me, thy verse was meant for other than thyself, and so forget it, Ninon.”

“And thou knowest not,” said she, “that France is the land of thy nativity! that thou didst first draw breath amongst her smiling vineyards and gay orchards! The jewel which clasps thy collar-band might have told thee a different tale. Hast thou ne’er read its motto?”

“ Ay, that have I many times, and in part imbibed its spirit,” replied the youth, “ but because I find myself in possession of this treasured amulet, (which I guard, Ninon, with as much affection and respect as thou couldst desire) and because I read thereon the words ‘ Dieu aide au premier Baron Chrétien,’ together with an inexplicable C., which stands alone, and frustrates my most ingenious surmises as to its meaning; because, thank God, I possess this key to possible future enlightenment, was it therefore an infallible consequence that myself should be a child of the Gallic soil? Of my birth or country I have hitherto known nothing; but I comprehend but too well that I was the child of charity, nurtured and brought up by the venerable Marquis of Gordon, owing to an extraordinary resemblance he fancied to discover in me, when by accident I came across his path, to a son long since dead. My benefactor now sleeps with his fathers; and I needed not the averted look and cold sufferance with which his successor endured my presence, to kindle into action the spark of loyalty and love to King Charles which has so long slumbered in my breast.”

"'Tis well," said she; "and thou shalt do him good service, else were I not here to-night."

As she spoke, she drew from the folds of her buffin gown a small packet, carefully folded, and bound round with narrow ribbon according to the custom of the time; the seals, however, had been broken; and, if not by Ninon herself, she was evidently mistress of the contents, as appeared from the manner in which she proceeded to address Albert.

"Carry this to the King, and he will see what traitors he harbours in his very palace; hasten on thy errand, my son, for within these two hours that packet shall be sought for far and wide. Even now is he approaching for whom it is designed."

Albert looked at the address, and with considerable surprise read the superscription, which was for the Marquis of Hamilton.

"But, good mother, this is for Lord Hamilton, no traitor surely! Did I not see him when late he waited on the tables in the name of his royal master? and in sooth he showed a zeal in the cause unequalled by any present!"

"Ay, and *he* saw *thee*, Albert; but no matter,

conscience alone gave thy glance the power to disquiet him, for he believes that power to rest with another, alas! how different a one!" and here she laughed wildly and sadly. "Yet, though he knew not wherefore, I marked him as he was troubled beneath thine eye; and ever his own reverted to thee, but it was not with a friendly gaze! But to remove thy doubts of the treachery of that zealous loyalist, read this letter. It contains the Lord Cardinal de Richelieu's answer to such proposals as the Marquis of Hamilton hath hardly made in his royal master's cause."

"I scorn to purchase information by such means," replied the young man; "enough that the letter carries the implication of treason. His Majesty, whom alone it concerns, must be the judge of its contents. And now farewell, my kind friend; tell me, when shall we meet again?"

"I know not," said she musingly, as once more she turned her eyes in the direction of the setting sun, and as Albert also raised his to take a parting look from the casement he had occupied for some time previous to her entrance, a sudden thought seemed to strike him. He quickly turned, and looked into his companion's face as if

connecting her by some sudden impulse with the scene before him.

“Tell me, Ninon, tell me, why do I remember this scene? O refuse not to tell me what have been my infant associations with it and with you?”

But before she could reply, both perceived at a distance a party of two or three horsemen, muffled in cloaks, and riding rapidly from a southerly direction towards the foot of the hills.

Hastily uttering “Avoid them, Albert, avoid them, as thou valuest thy life! and stir not from hence until—look yonder, boy—dost thou mark yon fir-crowned hill?—stir not until thou dost see arise from its summit a bright red flame, then speed thee to thy horse. Ride swiftly, but ride with caution!” she darted from the house, and directed her steps with headlong speed towards the hills. The horsemen, advancing from the contrary point, appeared for some time to be making for the tavern of the “John Knox:” they halted, however, and bent their course to the foot of the hill whereon the chapel stood. Lyndesay watched their movements as they wound around it, till at



length the increasing darkness rendered all objects indistinct.

At that moment the beacon rose, clear and high, above the dark summits of the fir trees ; and the young traveller was many miles southward before the bright luminary, which, at that unaccustomed season, gave rise to numerous conjectures in the surrounding country, became extinct.

## CHAPTER III.

The country mourns:

Mourns, because every plague that can infest  
Society, and that saps and worms the base  
Of th' edifice that policy has raised,  
Swarms in all quarters—meets the eye, the ear.  
And suffocates the breath at every turn.  
Profusion breeds them.

COWPER.

FOR some hours Albert Lyndesay pursued his way amid the loneliness and dreariness of the night, taking especial care to avoid the great roads by which communications might be in progress towards the town of Newcastle, of which the Scotch rebels had lately taken possession. The young cavalier, therefore, sought to pass through bye-roads or across commons, so as to avoid any wandering parties of the enemy, and to escape inquiries.

For some time he proceeded unmolested, but at length the jaded condition of the poor animal

which carried him compelled the rider to seek some place of temporary shelter and refreshment. As the unseasonableness of the hour rendered his chances of a favourable reception very precarious, from any of the humble inhabitants of the cottages which he passed at rare intervals, (and his desire to escape observation made a tavern ineligible for his purpose,) he cast his eyes around and surveyed on all sides the wide open country, which the moon was just commencing faintly to illumine with her thin, cold light, in search of some rough hut or shed where he might spread his tartan, and take an hour's rest, while his beast, with loosened girth and bit, should browse at leisure by the wayside.

Not far off he perceived a low wall surrounding a plot of ground, wherein grew a mass of rude orchard trees and low underwood, forming a tangled thicket, which in some places was overshadowed by the more lofty inhabitants of the forest. To this spot,—situated on a broad heath or common, and commonly known by the name of Percy's Grave, though believed to be defective in the circumstance of containing the remains of any of the Northumberland family,—our hero now hastened, and having amused his imagination by

fanciful speculations as to the probable scenes of rural festivity and rustic courtship of which this bower of Nature's forming seemed so well adapted to be the centre, he threw himself on the bank, and, having enveloped himself in his cloak, was losing consciousness in that reverie, which frequently forms the prelude to sound sleep, when he was roused to attention by the unwelcome approach of human footsteps, rudely brushing along the thick grass and heather which surrounded this retreat.

In a moment he roused himself, and withdrawing completely into the dark shadow of the recess, he lay unobserved as two men entered the copse and passed close beside him. The moon cast a partial light upon their countenances, and he could distinguish that the features of the foremost were dark, threatening, and dangerous; both were mean and ordinary in person; in fact just such men, as in such a place, and with such associations, would suggest ideas of treachery and villany.


Albert Lyndesay was brave, and accustomed to danger, and though the blood rushed back to his heart at the first moment of surprise in the discovery of such fearful odds, and he determined if

possible to avoid an encounter by remaining in concealment, yet another moment served to nerve him for the result of his situation, let it be what it might; and he watched with sufficient composure the movements of the two men, anxious to detect their object and design in meeting in this wild place at so strange an hour. From the few sentences which escaped them as they entered he was led to conclude that they had but recently met; their conversation consisting but of inquiries as to the present abode and destination of each.

“And where abides the damsel, Brother Jacopo, the worshipper of the woman clothed in scarlet, whilst thou, her father confessor, hast wandered forth to shrive another penitent?” said the man who had entered second, as with a faint laugh which sounded very much like a sneer, he threw himself upon the grass at a spot much further in the interior of the copse than Lyndesay had penetrated; so far, indeed, that the latter was unable to distinguish clearly the figures of the two men, or to overhear their conversation, excepting at intervals.

He however became distinctly aware of the reply, which was uttered in a raised tone: “A

curse on thy woman clothed in scarlet!—I came not here to listen to this jargon. Would'st thou ask me, man, where is mistress Margaret Hamilton? I tell thee that she is safely bestowed in the good town of Morpeth, not far hence, as thou knowest, where Father Jacopo judged it prudent for her health's sake that she should take some rest, whilst he kept his appointment with thee. And safe enough, I'll warrant, is she, for even should the Scots by chance lay hold upon her, the Lord Montrose is there to guard her. Nay, faith, I believe he would count a Scotch marauding party the honester keeping for his dainty mistress, for by my soul he eyed me as if he took me for the villain priest I would seem to be, or may be, spite of the cowl, he remembered that *he had seen me before*: and though he cared not to dispute with that fool Hamilton the leaving his niece in my charge, I'll be sworn he takes some means to watch our motions until we reach Whitehall. My Lord of Hamilton was an easy dupe, and it needed but a rosary and cassock to convince him that I was an ecclesiastical—knave; had the other lord been the game, Father Jacopo must have better learned his trade, but time and practice will soon attune my lips to the



“*Pax vobiscum*” as it has thine, Laurence, to the Alleluiahs and Amens and all the infernal cant that——”

“Tarry, I beseech thee, for a moment in thy speech, my brother,” said the other, in a tone in which fear seemed to be combating the usual self-complacency of the speaker, “and beware of using the heathen language which appertaineth to the wicked and malignant,—even to such as we shall by and by behold humbled in the dust beneath our feet, whilst we, the godly of the earth——”

“Fool!” interrupted Jacopo, “what have *we* to do with godliness! It is our stock in trade for the use and entertainment of the villains who make us their tools for their so-called righteous ends. Treat *them*, if thou wilt, with texts and saintship, but mark me, my friend, waste no sermons upon me. For thee, I know not if thou art greater hypocrite or coward—nay, man, shrink not. I shall not be more indulgent to myself, and I tell thee that the Marquis of Hamilton believes me a bigoted Dominican; Oliver and the rest confide blindly in my saintly puritanic zeal; and thou, Laurence, thou knowest that my creed is that which teaches that truth ever lies with the winning side. My articles of

faith are the secrets of all parties; to be betrayed to the opposite ones as interest and opportunity shall render them profitable. Let us not, at least, try to mask the villain to each other!"

The conversation gradually took a lower tone, and Albert could hear but little, save that now and then he distinguished the name of Ninon, and that of the Marquis of Hamilton. At length the man called Laurence exclaimed in a higher tone—

"And she cannot tell thee where to find the letters!"

"No," replied the other; "and it was on this account I sent for thee to meet me here, for as I needs must attend this pale-faced girl to London, I cannot myself hunt them out, or even gain a scent of their destination. But first I would know if thou hast marked any traveller in these parts of late, who could be carrying these documents to York, where assuredly they will go?"

"None," replied the other. "I know of no one likely for such a charge. The only traveller, except the great Lord Montrose, who hath tarried at our house within these few days, was a young fellow bound on a love-errand, as old Ninon said,



who sent for her to tell his fortune—he started overnight.”

“Then dog him,” exclaimed the other; “trace out his route, and search him, dead or alive. Bring me those papers, if art or force can avail to obtain them; and this boy is likely enough to be their bearer, for Ninon hath some grudge of old against Lord Hamilton, and may have read the lad his fortune out of his lordship’s correspondence. Truly, to judge by my noble patron’s despair at their loss, he hath good cause to wish them in no enemy’s hands, and in truth I know——” Here the voice again subsided, and a low and earnest conference ensued, which ended by both the men starting up and abruptly leaving the copse—the elder saying as they passed,

“Take with thee thy brother Brian for the encounter with this boy; but tell him nothing of *the* plot, upon thy life, Laurence. In seven or eight days at farthest we meet again.”

Totally at a loss as Albert Lyndesay had been to find a clue to the former part of this conversation, he readily comprehended that the latter referred to the letters he held in his possession, so mysteriously committed to him by Ninon; and

a vague, but momentary, doubt as to whether she were playing him fair, glanced across his mind as he heard sufficient to establish the conviction that she was in habitual communication with these lawless men. He dismissed the suspicion, however, as unworthy, and a little reflection served to convince him that, if false to any, it could not be to himself; as in case the letters addressed to the Marquis of Hamilton, which he held in his charge, contained anything treasonable, it was an undoubted act of service to the King to lay them before him. This service she had put in his power to render to his sovereign, at imminent risk and danger to herself.

These considerations, joined to one of those impressions not to be overcome, and in which we are perhaps rarely mistaken, of the reality of the goodwill of another towards us, induced him to determine, without loss of time, to pursue his journey towards York; guarding himself, however, to the utmost of his power against the perils which he foresaw must await him at every step. Young in diplomacy, but experienced in all exercises of courage and activity, he hoped that the strength and valour of his arm might defend

the charge he held against all assailants; above all, he was sustained by that conscience void of offence, which enabled him tranquilly and faithfully to commit his ways to the God whom he had served from his youth up, and whose will he believed himself to be fulfilling in devoting all his powers, and, if needs should be, his life, to the service of his lawful sovereign.

Animated by these reflections, he only waited until the last sound of the voices of his late companions died away on the far off plain, to rouse himself and to seek his horse, which had, however, strayed to a considerable distance. This circumstance caused him some delay, and on remounting he found that the animal, wearied by the incessant journeys of the last few days, went on with difficulty.

Finding that he should not be able to push on to York without giving his horse a much longer halt than he had anticipated, Albert decided upon spending the next day in perfect rest; hoping to make such progress before the morning dawned as, leaving the enemy's quarters behind, should enable him to seek with safety some house of public entertainment.

He therefore proceeded as well and rapidly as the jaded condition of his horse would allow, until he had passed the town of Durham, and at length had reached the borders of Yorkshire. The boundary of the counties was indicated by a rude stone distinguished by the name of Guy's Cross, and situated where four roads met, at the foot of which flowed a clear and gushing rivulet.

As the earliest glimmerings of approaching day appeared in the east, Lyndesay became sensible, with some anxiety, on surveying the surrounding country, of the difficulty he was likely to encounter in obtaining accommodation for himself and his steed during the hours of light. The scene was rude and desolate, with few or no traces of human habitation, and as he threw the bridle on his horse's neck, and suffered him quietly to drink his fill at the little stream, his thoughts very naturally reverted to the exhausted state of his own wallet, together with the apparent difficulty, if not impossibility, of replenishing it.

From these most unheroic cogitations he was roused by the sound of horses' feet in a direction nearly parallel to the road by which he had him-

self reached the spot, and confident, that whether the approaching party were friends or enemies, it was prudent to avoid intercourse with all strangers, he once more set spurs to his horse. The effort to keep ahead of the other travellers was, however, useless, and as one of them rode up and placed himself abreast of him, he recognized in the voice which bade him a civil "Good day" the tones which he had during the preceding night listened to as proceeding from the man he heard addressed as "Laurence."

Of his features he could not be equally certain, as the slight glimpse he had obtained by the uncertain moonlight, had not been sufficient to enable him confidently to recognize either of the parties. He replied, however, to the man's greeting in the same tone in which it was offered, and looking round to obtain a sight of his comrade, he observed that the latter, who was not the companion of the night's consultation, was endeavouring to take the place on the other side of himself. To avoid the danger of being thus hemmed in, he reined his horse close to the rude stone wall which formed the enclosure to the right, and proceeded, as if without suspicion, to inquire for the nearest inn.

"You know but little of these parts, may be, young master?" replied the man, as he fixed his keen eye on Albert's face; "are you journeying far south?"

"My errand will probably lead me very far southward," replied the young man, "but for the present I would rest, could I meet with a place of shelter and refreshment."

"Why, truly, your tired beast will hardly get so far as York this night, master. I never saw a poor animal so worn out, he stumbles at every step. You've been many days on the road, I fancy?"

"Several, and shall therefore be the more obliged to you, for pointing me out a resting place."

"Why there's few hostelries like my own mother's. Were ye ever on the borders?"

"Whether I have or not avails but little, my friend, towards my present inquiry. Your mother's tavern, though doubtless excellent, can be of little service to me, seeing that my horse's head is turned the other way."

"Ay, ye're for York, master, as I said, but never think to reach it on that poor creature's

back. Brian, boy, get off your horse and bring him round, may be the gentlemen would be glad to pay a trifle for the exchange."

"I have no intention of proceeding to York for this day at any rate," interrupted Albert. "After you have answered my inquiry, make yourself easy as to the fate both of myself and my horse."

During this remark, the younger of the two men, in obedience to his brother's order, had dismounted; and Albert was considering the meaning of the very peculiar smile which he had noted on his companion's countenance as he spoke to him, when he received a violent blow from behind, which struck him from his horse. In his sudden fall, the important packet which was the object of the present outrage escaped from his vest, and fell to the ground.

Roused by the sight of it, from the momentary stupor into which the blow had thrown him, he seized the packet, and, starting to his feet, immediately drew his rapier. But the horseman had already taken his aim; and his well directed bullet passed through the young man's shoulder, and caused his arm to fall nerveless by his side. The parcel was released from his grasp, and the younger of his assailants seized it instantly.

"Now away with thee!" shouted Laurence, "hold it safe, whilst I deal with this gallant." So saying, he parried the thrust which Albert was essaying with his unwounded arm, and using his advantage over an unhorsed foe, he dealt him a heavy blow on the crown of the head, with the back of his rapier.

One minute the young man stood, giddy and reeling, and drew out a small pistol, which he aimed at the heart of his antagonist. He discharged it as he fell, but the bullet only entered the horse's flanks, and in another moment he himself lay insensible on the earth, the blood gushing from his mouth and nostrils.

"And now Brian, thou mayest return whence thou cam'st, and leave to me the further management of this affair," said the elder ruffian. "And forget not to tell that old witch Ninon, that thou hast been obeying her commands, and hast offered thy service in the Scottish camp, where already thou hast performed a signal feat; and beware, lad, that thou say not what it is, but thou mayest add that the Lord fought for Israel."

At these words the youth so addressed, glad to escape on any terms from a scene of violence



so little suited to his cowardly nature, remounted, and rapidly rode off in the direction by which he and his companion had arrived. The man called Laurence, after casting a look of contemptuous pity towards the victim of his lawless cruelty, proceeded to take possession of the papers hastily thrown on the ground by his brother, together with some antique gems which had become visible in Lyndesay's fall; having been concealed under the outer vest, till the latter was loosened by the unclasping of his belt. He read the address of the packet, and muttering to himself, "Better for my Lord Hamilton, may be, had they remained even where they were!" he seized the rein of his wounded horse, and leisurely conducted him from the spot, retiring to one of those many places of refuge which a wild country, inhabited by a rude and disaffected people, offers abundantly in times of public disturbance and commotion to the violators of her laws and liberties.

## CHAPTER IV.

She was a phantom of delight,  
When first she beamed upon my sight :  
A lovely apparition sent  
To be a moment's ornament ;  
A creature, not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food :  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

WORDSWORTH.

THE grey dawn of morning had given place to a rich, glowing sunshine, and the bright green of the turf and tender shoots of the foliage seemed heightened in hue as they imbibed the dewy shower which was fast exhaling before the sun. In contrast with the brilliancy and freshness which nature sheds on this her opening hour of loveliness and fragrance, there appeared at intervals on all sides of the landscape, dark plantations of Scotch fir, interspersed with the ancient holly : and as the extreme unevenness of the country

served to conceal any human habitation, if such existed in the neighbourhood, so it afforded most picturesque varieties of surface, on which those sombre patches of forest hung at intervals, relieved by precipitous ravines in the stony soil, or by the verdant fields and clear blue sky which stood out with all the softened brilliancy of a beautiful morning. The joyous burst of song which thrilled through the feathered creation, from bush to bush, and from tree to tree, and the measured ripple of the neighbouring stream, alone interrupted the stillness of the scene, although in perfect unison with it.

At such an hour, a sense of the harmony of creation steals over the human heart, itself the only discordant note in that great choir, and the mind most agitated and turbulent can hardly resist the overpowering feelings, which would prompt an utterance in the beautiful language of the poet,—

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,  
Almighty—thine the universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair.”

At present, however, no human ear enjoyed the melody of the scene, no human voice was raised in thanksgiving. On the bank where he

had fallen when stunned by the blow of the rapier, Albert Lyndesay still lay ; inanimate and senseless,—unconscious of the risen morning. His horse, now quite refreshed, quietly browsed on the dewy grass near him.

Suddenly the bark of a dog was heard in the distance, and immediately afterwards appeared a beautiful little spaniel of the breed since called King Charles's, at that time much admired, which, bounding from under the shade of one of the woods, sprang forwards in the direction of the little rivulet. On passing the spot where the bloody figure of Lyndesay was stretched motionless, the dog stopped and growled violently, then rushed back to the point whence he came. A clamorous barking ensued, and once more the dog ran towards the place where Albert lay. His manœuvre seemed to be understood, for immediately in pursuit of him two young girls appeared from an opening under the trees, and, calling the dog by name, endeavoured to coax him into quietness.

The foremost of these, and the apparent mistress of the dog, was one of those creatures whom, with the young, to look at is to love ; with the old, instinctively to regard with interest and indul-

gence. Scarcely on the verge of womanhood she retained as yet all the innocence of expression and reckless gladness of demeanour which constitutes the bewitching charm of childhood. Gaiety sparkled in her large blue eye, and the archness which seemed natural to it was alternately softened and heightened by the play of the long lash, as the ever-changing emotions of the heart spoke through the countenance. Her rich brown hair, confined above the brow by a pale blue fillet, wandered in long ringlets upon her shoulders, whilst the bright hue of her cheek spoke of health improved by fresh air and exercise.

She wore a simple dress entirely of white, with an embroidered girdle of the same colour as the fillet that bound her hair, and over her whole person was thrown a large veil or scarf, which seemed to have been hastily wrapped round her figure, with the view of taking a few minutes' airing. Altogether, her appearance denoted no preparation for a distant ramble from her own threshold, yet was there no sign of human residence within view.

"Now fie upon thee! Alice," said she to her attendant, still pursuing the spaniel as he

approached the spot where Albert lay ; “ fie upon thee that thou shouldest wish me and my pet to part company ! Surely did my father know that my faithful Carlo had escaped from us, he would for once release us from his injunction not to wander further than the garden.”

The girl thus addressed appeared some years older than her mistress, and though gifted also with a considerable share of beauty, her face lacked that charm of simplicity so conspicuous in the other, while something of conscious vanity might be detected in every gesture. Waiting-maids have a proverbial detestation of all favourites, whether biped or quadruped, and this feeling might in part influence the tone of her reply.

“ Nay, my lady, I would not contradict your will, though I don’t think my lord would give you licence to disobey him for the sake of a little growling beast like that. However, should it be known that we have done so, you will bear testimony that I warned you not to proceed.”

“ Alice, Alice, boast not of thy precaution. Didst thou not play the tempter, and bribe me by thy report of the purple orchis’s, which, by the

by, we never found, to accompany thee beyond the avenue, where we met thy strange acquaintance. And now I bethink me, it is but since our encounter with him that thou hast altered thy tone, and hast been so urgent for me to return. Tell me, what did he whisper in thine ear?"

This was said mischievously, and without design. Alice, however, coloured deeply.

"Alack! my lady," said she, "he is but a wayfarer, and no acquaintance of mine, and he whispered but a few sweet words of Christian counsel and exhortation."

"If but a common traveller, he must be far out of his path," resumed the young girl, "but doubtless he will soon recover it, as he evidently possesses the gift of second-sight. Else how should he have discovered that thou alone wert capable of profiting by his admonition? Clearly he discerned my poor self to be either too good to need it, or too evil to benefit by it."

"Beware, my lady, of such unseemly jesting. The gift of prophecy is bestowed upon many of the brethren and sisters in the holy covenant, and only proves that he had a right to address to me a word in season."

“ And thy reply ? but I will spare thee, Alice, and for thy further consolation I will promise to take upon myself all blame which may arise from our excursion beyond bounds this day ; only in guerdon for my generosity, I must entreat thee to forbear the wearisome lectures which thou hast of late been pleased to read me so often on this same covenant, of which I know little, and, in sooth, for which I care less ; and if thy brother, as thou callest him, be a specimen,—but, oh, God ! what have we here ! a man all wounded and bloody !—Alas ! as I think, he’s dead ! ”

“ Oh, my lady ! listen to me,” hastily returned the affrighted abigail, “ and let us return instantly to the house, and make no mention of this dreadful sight. I knew something very horrible would happen to us if we came on,—in fact, Laurence, I mean that stranger told me so. See, my lady, the man is quite dead ; you can do him no good, but will bring yourself into danger. These are not the times for young ladies to succour wounded travellers with impunity. And now I think of it, your grandmother laid her injunctions on you to meet her at an early hour this morning ; she is doubtless inquiring for you,—let us away ! ”



“Impossible! I am not sure that he is beyond all hope of revival,” said the young lady, who had been attentively considering the inanimate form at her feet.

“Never again in this world,” sighed the other; “and what makes it worse is, that he no doubt perished in some profane brawl; but, as to yourself, my lady, I will answer for it my lord, your father,”—

“Would not leave a fellow-creature weltering in his blood, Alice, if human aid or skill might avail him.—And see,—life is assuredly not extinct, for now the dog begins to lick his face, and you know his instinctive horror at anything dead.”

So saying the maiden ran to the neighbouring stream, and collecting in the palms of her hands a little water, she dashed it into Albert’s face. Her exertion appeared to be inefficacious, for still he continued ghastly and insensible, prostrate on the turf. The cap he wore had fallen off and lay by him. The young lady took it up, and giving it to her attendant, bade her hasten to fill it with water from the rivulet, whilst she herself raised the head of the sufferer and loosened his collar.

On a repetition of her attempt to rouse him by a dash of the water, which she had now in a larger quantity, the patient showed signs of sensation, and after a few struggles his eyelids were raised, as if by a painful effort, and the full and astonished gaze of his dark eyes was fixed upon the lovely form that was kneeling beside him, anxiously watching his recovery.

For a moment he could have believed a ministering angel had descended to succour him in his hour of need, but the deep flush that mantled on her cheek as she became sensible of his look of wondering admiration, soon recalled him to the consciousness that it was no ethereal being whom he contemplated. He saw before him a creature, young and beautiful indeed, yet, like himself, animated by the feelings of poor humanity, of which the hitherto predominant one of pity was beginning to give way before maidenly confusion and bashfulness, as she perceived that the object of her benevolent exertions was no ordinary wayfarer or common serf, but a man of apparent breeding, youthful, and in countenance extremely prepossessing, and who evidently was seized with equal perplexity at the sight of herself.

The discovery of a young and handsome man in the unfortunate traveller whom her mistress had succoured, had its effect also upon Alice, who proceeded with alacrity to bring more water, that he might attempt to drink; whilst her lady, perceiving that Lyndesay was endeavouring with pain to speak, pressed her finger to her lips, and shaking her head, thus mutely forbade all inquiries or acknowledgments for the present.

As the young man endeavoured to raise the water to his lips he became sensible, for the first time, of the wound which rendered his right arm powerless; and the acute pain he suffered in the effort was evident to his preserver, who, with prompt kindness, loosened the kerchief which was bound round her hair, and speedily made a sling for his arm. Ashamed to receive so much assistance, Albert made an effort to rise, but weakness prevailed, and he fell back upon the grass, whilst the dog, as if delighted at witnessing his return to life and consciousness, leaped and barked around his mistress, apparently in triumph at the success of his own manoeuvre.


“Do thou, Alice, stay and offer this gentleman all the aid in thy power, whilst I speedily return

to the house, and seek some stronger arm to help him thither. The case is beyond our skill, and we must have the Lady Clare's assistance. Thou knowest my grandmother is an unerring leach," said the young lady, as watching Lyndesay's ineffectual efforts to rise, she became aware of his extreme weakness.

"But, my lady! the danger of receiving a stranger under your roof! of harbouring a rebel, perhaps, as my lord, your father, would say."

As Alice spoke, a faint smile passed across Albert's pallid features, and making a violent exertion to speak, he exclaimed, interrupting her,—

"Not for me, dearest lady, not for me, must you or yours be exposed to any danger. I am no rebel, and God knows that till this hour my heart has known no passion, save its loyalty; yet these are not times in which you ought to trust a stranger. Forgive me, if I have been the cause of misadventure to you. Already you have done too much, and I entreat you now to leave me, and fear not but that HE who guided your steps hitherwards to restore to me my life, will now find means for its preservation."



Exhausted and suffering, his strength failed him, and the warm-hearted girl, as she prepared to fulfil her kind intention, hastily replied to the selfish remonstrances of her maid :

“ Rebel, or loyal subject, Alice, doubtless his existence is dear to some, but all who love King Charles must be thrice welcome to my father’s daughter. Fear not, then, that your entertainment should cause us risk or blame,” she added, as with a kindly smile she bent towards her patient. Then, taking the dog in her arms, she bounded across the turf, and was out of sight in a moment.

Lyndesay followed her with his eyes, but sighed deeply at the reflections which her words had called up. He knew not what it was to own an existence dear to others ; he believed, that had he expired in that hour, no tear would have been shed for him ; perhaps, none would have known or even inquired what had befallen the adopted dependent, whom Lord Gordon’s whimsical partiality had raised from the rank of a peasant. Old Ninon, perchance, might have uttered a few wild lamentations, but how far even she was connected with the ruffians who had caused his present

calamity, he could not ascertain. Friendless, and alone in the world, it was not wonderful that the benevolent interest so feelingly evinced towards him by the fair being who had just vanished, should have made a lively impression; and, after the lapse of some time, he ventured an inquiry concerning her, though in an embarrassed and hesitating tone.

“Pray, tell me, mistress Alice, for so I think I heard you called,—tell me, I entreat you, to whom I owe my restoration to consciousness?”

With a coquettish toss, the girl replied, “Alack, master, to the Lord, surely.” A deep sigh followed this, according but ill with the lively countenance and demeanour of the damsel.

“Undoubtedly so, pretty mistress Alice,” returned our hero, “I did, perhaps, express myself unguardedly, though the omission, I trust, extended but to language. And having satisfied thy scruples, by the assurance that the grateful homage of my heart had long preceded thy memento, hasten to satisfy my eager desire to know who is the angel of goodness who has been the kindly instrument of my preservation.”

“For that matter, I know not, master, which

of us you would speak of, since both my young lady and myself laboured for your recovery. But woe is me, to hear you calling a fellow worm, even though it was myself, by the name of angel ! The saints themselves see angels only in dreams and visions of the night, and at sundry times they have appeared in that way, even to me."

Lyndesay, though suffering much, could hardly forbear a smile at the girl's flippancy and assumption. As, however, her phraseology was far from being new to him, and seldom had he heard it from prettier lips, he forbore retort, and only replied,—

" Well ! furnish me with thy lady's real name, and I will carefully avoid, for the future, all allusion to the hierarchy of thy nocturnal visions."

The damsel, somewhat piqued, assumed a more portentous expression than before, as she answered,—

" Ask me any question you please about myself, young gentleman, and I will inform you to the utmost ; yea, if it might profit you, I would relate by what marvellous grace my poor spirit escaped from its Egyptian bondage, to the liberty

and light of the holy covenant. But as to my lady's name, you must stifle your curiosity, and may be you were little the easier for gratifying it; for my lord, her father, though he be my master, is, I am bold to say, both feared and hated, in these parts, more than any man living, and he apprehends mischief to his daughter, if she bear in public the name of so notorious a delinquent as himself. He, therefore, laid his commands on me to be silent respecting it, and I obey, less from fear of his anger, than because it is my habit, when not moved by the Spirit to speak."

To this oration, which served but to increase Lyndesay's curiosity, and to mingle with it an unaccountable feeling of anxiety and suspicion, he only replied,—

"Had I been conscious the lady's father desired the concealment of her name, I had been the last man to wish to penetrate the mystery. Thy own story, mistress Alice, I shall gladly hear at leisure; and now wilt thou have the grace to hand me my sword, which lies there beside thee; may be, the left hand can wield it yet!"



She complied, and Albert, on replacing his sword-belt around his waist, seemed to become aware of the loss of some part of his dress, for which he looked anxiously around. Alice looked too, though totally at a loss to conjecture for what; and after waiting some time, in the vain hope of an explanation, she said, "One might suppose, sir stranger, you had missed your lady's token, by the extreme concern you shew for its recovery."

"I cry thee mercy, mistress Alice," returned he, "but thy guess hath fallen far short of the reality, since the loss of which thou speakest might admit of a substitute—mine can never be replaced."

Piqued into a yet more vivid curiosity by these words, Alice would have pursued the theme, but, at this moment, the two men sent by her young mistress appeared from the wood, and advanced towards them. One of these was old and decrepid, and bore the appearance of a common groom; but the other was so extraordinary a figure, that as he approached, Lyndesay could not help regarding him with a feeling akin to horror and disgust.

His stature was that of a boy under twelve years of age, but his large and misshapen head and strongly marked features indicated that in years, at least, he had arrived at man's estate. His mouth, immensely wide, assumed, as he approached, a scornful smile, which certainly conveyed the impression of any feeling rather than of mirth, and he fixed on Alice a look of hatred and defiance, as she said jeeringly to Lyndesay, "My lady hath sent thee her page, sir knight, for thy guide and escort. He will betray neither her nor thyself, I warrant, though his countenance seems to bode no good. Now, hasten, Pierre, to aid this gentleman."

The dwarf made some gesticulations to his companion, which seemed to be understood, for they proceeded gently to raise the wounded man from the ground. This piece of service was, however, performed, as it appeared, grudgingly, and in the manner of men who are compelled to an undertaking wholly opposed to their inclination or judgment. They also preserved an inflexible silence, which Albert was the first to break.

"Unwilling service, my friends, is ever irk-

some, and if the proffered courtesy of your mistress may involve her in hazard or in trouble, pray tell me so at once, and I dismiss you: my gratitude towards herself can suffer no diminution. Speak, my good fellows, I entreat you."

This was addressed to the dwarf, who for all answer opened his wide mouth, and exposed its tongueless cavity, and for the first time Lyndesay became sensible that the poor creature was dumb. He, however, shook his head at our hero's words, and then reverently pressed to his lips a heavy silver crucifix which was suspended from his neck. Alice took upon her to explain this mute reply.

"He would have you to understand, sir stranger, by that idolatrous piece of papistry, that he is obeying my lady's orders. I can only say, I wonder she chooses to be represented by a graven image."

To Albert it did not appear so unaccountable that the poor speechless wretch should use the relic he doubtless held most precious, to denote an authority, which, to him, of course was sacred; still less so, that his habit should be tolerated. But without further parley, he accepted the proffered assistance of Pierre, and the next moment

the whole party were in progress towards the wood, from which, successively, all the individuals composing it, excepting Albert himself, had made their appearance.

As they proceeded, our hero had leisure to notice further the extreme ugliness of the dwarf, which seemed a concentration of all that nature ever had designed of the unsightly and hideous. The repulsive expression also which his countenance at present wore served to heighten the effect of features harsh and strong to deformity. Spite of this, Albert thought that the small quick eye which peered from under the projecting and shaggy brow might not at all times look so threatening; and the impression grew as he gazed, that were the deep lines of that frowning forehead, and the dogged sullenness of the thick-set lips, relaxed, the face before him might wear the habitual impress rather of suffering than of malice, of long endurance rather than of meditated evil. He remarked also with surprise the almost supernatural strength which exhibited itself in the strongly developed muscles of this unfortunate creature, whose deficiency in the stature common to his race seemed to be in part compensated by

more than double the muscular force of an ordinary man. This he displayed by the ease with which he undertook the task of bearing the almost helpless form of Albert without the assistance of his companion, to whom he made a signal to take charge of our hero's horse, on a request to that effect from its master.

They followed the course of the path amongst the trees for nearly half a mile, and subsequently emerged from it, through a heavy gateway, into a broad and regular avenue of stately chestnuts. At the end of this, though too distant to be distinguished accurately, appeared the broad flight of steps leading to the entrance of a mansion, built in the trim and unique style of Elizabeth's time. As they neared the house, Lyndesay perceived that the avenue terminated in a large open space surrounding the building, and from this diverged, at right angles, two other avenues corresponding with that which they had traversed; the fourth side of the building being devoted to the courtyard and out-houses.

The mansion was of bright red brick, faced with stone, and was surrounded by a gravelled terrace, with a parapet also of stone: from thence descended

broad steps into the plaisance which has been mentioned as encircling the house. This garden, which bore the remains of former cultivation and care, at present appeared neglected and overrun with weeds. The dwindling flowers grew over the walks, the shrubs crowded one upon another, in default of the pruning-knife, and the trim yews were emancipating themselves from the thralldom in which they had long been held to shapes and attitudes of which their nature was perfectly unconscious; urns, peacocks, and globes gradually disappearing as the young shoots took their natural position. Around the place there reigned a stillness which might be felt, and as the signs of external neglect denoted that it had for some time been uninhabited, the spot seemed well adapted for any purpose of seclusion, which might be essential to its present occupants.

Lyndesay was conducted to the entrance, and on the summit of the steps he was met by a venerable and aged lady, who, with some anxiety in her countenance, but with perfect courtesy in her manner, addressed to him a formal greeting.

"I welcome you, sir stranger, under this poor roof, now so little meet for the reception of

guests; but my granddaughter tells me that you are a friend of King Charles's; moreover, that you are seriously wounded, and alone. God forbid our house should refuse hospitality to such an one! Accept then its shelter until such time as your recovery shall enable you to continue your journey; more than shelter I hardly have to offer, for our accommodation is but poor, and our attendance scarce."

During the old lady's speech, our hero's eyes had wandered far and wide in the hope to obtain another vision of her lovely granddaughter, but she was nowhere to be seen. Her absence, however, left him leisure to observe the courtly demeanour and venerable grace of the speaker.

She was what, in those times, was probably called old-fashioned in her dress and manners, wearing the immensely broad ruff and spacious farthingale of Queen Elizabeth, with a black velvet robe made tightly to fit the bust; the petticoat trimmed with robings of miniver, and the chatelaine with its pendant keys at her side. She still retained the high and ponderous head-dress, which had recently given way to a more becoming style in the Mary Stuart cap, and she bore herself

with a dignity of which the stateliness contrasted with the benevolent kindness that beamed in her countenance.

Albert Lyndesay stooped to kiss the hand which was held out to him as he replied in a tone of respect and deference :

“ Surely, madam, it would ill become me, who am indebted to you for a welcome to which I have no claim but my necessity, and to your fair young relative for restoration to life itself, to contemn the favours I owe but to your bounty. Believe only that you are bestowing them upon one who will never abuse your confidence, nor forget your kindness.”

The Lady Clare, (for so her granddaughter had designated her) replied by an inclination of of her majestic figure, and motioned with her hand towards the dwarf to indicate that he should proceed. As they entered the mansion, the motto over the doorway, “ *En Dieu est tout,*” caught the eye of Albert, and though its heraldic purport was unknown to him, its piety touched his heart, for the religious faith of those days was closely allied with casual impressions, to which superstition added importance.




This slight circumstance therefore took the colour of an auspicious omen, and he reflected on it, as the attendants obeyed the command of the Lady Clare, to conduct him to the chamber prepared for him. When placed in comparative ease upon the couch, and—after the application of various balsams, which the Lady Clare's leechcraft had supplied—once more left alone, a thousand conflicting emotions came crowding upon his mind, and banished the repose so essential to his present weak condition.

His first impulse was gratitude to heaven, deep and ardent. Subsequently the loss of his important packet came to his recollection, and he reflected with bitterness upon an opportunity thus lost of recommending himself to the King's favour, through the means, perhaps, of an essential service. Supposing this, then it was to be feared that the possession of such papers by his enemies, might be prejudicial to his majesty's interests. Having received from Ninon a hint that the letters in question implicated the Marquis of Hamilton in a charge of treasonable correspondence, Lyndesay could not avoid associating this nobleman in some degree with the

circumstances attending their recovery: but it seemed at the same time improbable, that the agents employed by so great and wealthy a nobleman in such an enterprise, should have perpetrated the other robbery; this was the abstraction from his person of the jewel, of which the loss cost him even more poignant regret than that of the packet. Then to have been unhorsed, defeated, though by such unequal odds, it was mortifying and humiliating!

Yet, across all these sad thoughts, there glanced at times a feeling more akin to satisfaction than he owned to himself. Had this calamity not overtaken him, never would he have beheld the lovely and high born maiden, whose presence had that morning gladdened his return to life. True, their interview had been but brief, still it had occurred in circumstances which had revealed the humanity of her character. And then how she had blushed when he looked at her!

Solitude is a faithful nurse to young romance, and such bright visions, cherished by the fancy, make a deep and dangerous impression on the heart. The incognita thrown around this beautiful and noble girl, too, did not fail to lend its auxiliary



charm. That her birth *was* noble there seemed no doubt, were it only for the appeal of Alice, so frequently repeated as to carry almost a ludicrous effect, to "my lord your father." The concealment of the name was a matter of no extraordinary marvel to Lyndesay, who knew that at that period many families of distinction residing in or near the neighbourhood of the conflicting parties, had sought to evade the outbursts of popular frenzy, or military licence, by quitting for a time those residences, which from their notoriety, were likely to become the objects of public outrage, and had sought refuge in less obtrusive spots. That such was the case in the present instance he felt assured, not only from the information he had gathered through Alice's unguarded communicativeness, but also from the constrained reception of the old lady herself.

The dwarf Pierre next presented himself to his recollection, and he reflected on the evident aversion which he, also, had exhibited towards introducing him into their retreat. On this subject alone, it appeared that he and Alice agreed, for otherwise sufficient had passed to indicate an established dislike and hatred between

the two retainers. Religion might, in part, account for this ; since Alice's affected and drawling tones announced her adoption of the puritanic code, and the French extraction of the dwarf, together with his crucifix, led to the suspicion that his might be the opposite error, and that he was a votary of Rome.

By the time our hero had indulged all these sage reflections, and had partaken of some slight refreshment, he was so overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, that he fell into a sound sleep.

## CHAPTER V.

A genuine priest,  
The shepherd of his flock ; or, as a king  
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,  
The father of his people. Such is he ;  
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice,  
Under his spiritual sway. The calm delights  
Of unambitious piety he chose,  
And learning's solid dignity.—WORDSWORTH.

It was not until the evening of the same day that our hero awoke from the deep sleep into which his previous exhaustion had thrown him ; and when he did so, and attempted to raise himself, he became sensible for the first time of the extent of the injury he had received from the blow of the rapier, which had, in the first instance, so effectually stunned him. A degree of faintness he had never experienced before caused him to sink back upon his pillow ; his brain reeled, and, giddy and sick, he relapsed into that state of per-

fect quietude which the mere exertion of speaking so disturbs as to produce a sensation of delirium.

He had not, however, been neglected during his slumbers, as the page had frequently entered by order of the old lady, to see if he still slept. She now herself visited his chamber, to ascertain his state previously to joining the family at their evening meal; and perceiving that the danger from fever was much aggravated, she instantly decided that he must be bled. Turning to Pierre, she lamented the absence of the usual Esculapius of the family, who had not accompanied them into this retreat, and proceeded to express her ignorance as to the means of procuring the necessary surgical assistance for their patient.

The dwarf considered a moment, then touched his forehead, as if an idea had struck him, and subsequently by a series of gestures having made the Lady Clare comprehend that he awaited authority from her, she replied,—“ But this aid, I fear me, will be but tardy, and how trust to the prudence of a stranger who should come within these walls ?” To the first of these objections he replied by covering the taper he held so as entirely to veil its light, thereby intimating that

the proposed visit should take place during the darkness, and in answer to the second, he pressed his forefinger to his lips, and immediately laid the hand upon his heart, as if giving his pledge for the silence of the party in question. The Lady Clare, accustomed to his manner of conversation, immediately understood his signs, and appeared to have perfect reliance on his faith, as she said, "Then be it so, good Pierre; bring him here under cover of the night. I trust to thy skill in managing the matter, and have not now, my poor boy, to learn thy fidelity; so God prosper thee in thy errand!"

The page, whose harsh countenance had seemed but ill calculated to call forth the tone of kindness in which he was addressed, instantly dropped on one knee at these words. When Albert, who, though suffering intensely, had watched the scene with interest, beheld the altered expression of that repulsive face, as the eyes, brimful of tears, were for a moment raised with a look of devoted gratitude to the old lady's countenance, he no longer wondered at the attachment of these seemingly unprotected ladies to their mute retainer, a partiality which had at first struck him as somewhat whimsical.

Pierre immediately rose, and left the room

to execute his commission, and the Lady Clare, conscious that even the excitement consequent on her presence was prejudicial to the invalid, descended to join the family at supper

Perhaps we have rather misapplied the word *family* in using it to designate the very limited party who now sat down in the spacious and respectable oak-panelled parlour of the mansion : their present seclusion having caused a suspension of the then usual habit of partaking in company with the assembled household. There were present but three individuals ; the old lady herself, her granddaughter, and a clergyman of the church of England, whom they addressed as Master Howard.

This gentleman had accepted the office of domestic chaplain to the Lady Clare, with the view of affording her by his presence some substitute for the protection of the male portion of her family, from which her present abode separated her. In this, as in every other transaction of his life, Howard had acted with a simplicity and singleness of heart worthy the friend and disciple of George Herbert, which he was, having refused the offer of a rich incumbency made to him at the



identical period by the primate, from the pure conviction that his post of usefulness for the present, was in the household of one, whose age and circumstances needed this apparently small return for long-tried kindness.

Great part of his time he devoted to the education of her granddaughter, and he lost no opportunity of impressing upon the mind of his pupil the most sound and rational principles of piety, whilst he improved her understanding by a well-chosen course of historical reading, which, perhaps, contributes more than any other pursuit to enlarge the mind and liberalize the character, at the same time that it materially assists in forming the judgment. The young lady possessed a disposition strongly imaginative, and her natural genius, deeply tinged with romance, might have led her, in her youthful studies, as afterwards in her maturer judgment, to love beauty rather than truth. Howard taught her, by directing her attention to *facts* (and in the long pages of historic story, who cannot find facts wild enough for the most romantic imagination?) to prefer truth to beauty, or perhaps rather to seek beauty in truth. He laboured not to combat the enthu-

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siasm or to change the tastes, of his fair pupil, but so to direct both, that they should lend their strength for the support of a character dominated by religion and good sense. He gratified her love for poetry in the perusal of the best authors of her native tongue, but made her sensible of the vast inferiority of these to the sublime and glorious poets of the Scripture—the thrilling language of Isaiah—the exquisite and various modulations of the harp of the royal Psalmist! He pointed out to her ready admiration the elegant, yet gorgeous, imagery of the East, and in the overwhelming wonders of Omnipotence, he led her to merge some of the interest excited by the marvellous legends of fiction.

We must not estimate by the present state of things, the danger to the female mind from these latter sources, existing at the period of which we write; since almost the only light literature at that time possessed by women, abounded in these ever ready sources of excitement, and infallible aids to the writer of fiction, the fairies and genii, witches and spirits, dark and white, who by the stroke of a wand brought about consummations impossible to flesh and blood. And since whatever we read

of the actions of others, influences our own more than we care to allow, the result of such studies was not likely to be practical good sense, neither were they calculated to induce a power of thinking accurately, and judging with discrimination.

Occasionally, indeed, a woman was led to enter into the profound and abstruse studies, of which the pursuit in these days would constitute a *bas bleu*, but in doing so she quitted the beaten path of feminine accomplishment, and became a character of celebrity; so that we read of the acquirements of a Margaret Beaufort or a Lady Jane Grey, a Queen Elizabeth or a Queen Christina, much in the same spirit with which we view the incursions of a Raleigh upon the *terra incognita* of Guiana, or the yet more adventurous spirit of a Christopher Columbus: we admire them, and triumph in their achievements, but attempt not to imitate. They were great and remarkable persons, but their career afforded no precedent for the routine of common life. For the multitude, then as at present, ordinary cares and pursuits were essential, and it was for the fulfilment of these to the happiness of herself and those around her, that Howard had endeavoured to prepare his

pupil's mind. At the same time he cultivated her memory by an application to modern languages, and encouraged her in a moderate pursuit of such recreations and accomplishments as the naturally elegant bias of her taste led her to adopt.

It was this enlightened system of education, combined with fine natural powers, which gave to our heroine (for as such we beg to introduce her to the reader,) an intelligence far beyond what was usual at her years, at a period when the common acquirements of females were limited to writing with correctness, and embroidering with taste. This greatly heightened her beauty, as entirely unconscious of her own attractions, she had not lost in simplicity what she had gained in maturity of intellect. Her gaiety of heart and manner too, contributed to the fascination of her countenance, and, perhaps, after this assertion, it may seem strange to say, that to the perfecting of such a character, only the touch of sorrow seemed wanting.

Affectionate and apparently unselfish a fresh young heart may be, and a lovely thing it is to contemplate, but we believe that, until the shadow of affliction has passed across the sunshine of

youth, no spirit is chastened, no heart softened, to complete sympathy with its fellow men.

Of course this remark applies, with various degrees of force, to different characters, and that of our heroine appeared to require but a gentle jection to this discipline, which sooner or later arrives to all. Ever ready to lend a kind ear to distress, or to exert herself in soothing and relieving it, she had not, however, as yet become familiar enough with its aspect, to seek in the countenance an untold tale, or to comprehend the silent sigh of an oppressed heart. Herself the darling of her good grandmother and of a fond father, (for her mother had died in her infancy,) she had been too much the spoiled child of nature and of fortune, to comprehend the full value of the blessings she possessed.

Howard had observed this, but, confident that time and experience must deepen the current of thought, he only endeavoured, by a judicious tone of conversation, and gentle advice, to check, in some degree, her too sanguine mood, and to give that firmness to her character which he foresaw, in times such as those in which they lived, might all be needed.

As for the Lady Clare, she allowed him to take his own way with regard to her granddaughter's education, provided only that the young girl accomplished daily a certain task of embroidering in tapestry. The scene which formed the subject of her labours, was a heart-rending portraiture of the parting of Hector and Andromache, which had already occupied her for five years, and at the most moderate computation, promised her employment during as many more ; Astyanax not having yet given signs of appearing, and Hector's impassioned gestures having for object but the fair forehead and one eye of his beloved. However, the good old lady was accustomed to declare, that the time spent on this pathetic representation was the only part of the day which Kate, in her opinion, employed usefully: that as she could both read and write correctly, and as the child was not born to be a queen, she could not see the object of all the learning Master Howard was putting into her head. Well! she was sure he would teach her to be dutiful and obedient at any rate, and for the rest, Kate was so giddy that she did not doubt she would soon forget it all.

With this consolatory assurance the old lady would leave the room, miscalled the library of the mansion, where Howard had established himself with his own few books, added to which appeared on the shelves the dilapidated fragments of an Ovid, and a "History of the miraculous cures, changes, and other marvels effected at the tomb of the most holy St. Thomas à Becket," an odd volume of Chaucer, a cookery-book, and a pile of dirty looking pamphlets, which the old lady intended, she said, to use as fuel, the last occupant of the house having been foolish and extravagant enough to collect together all the trash uttered and written by that wild vagrant, Will Shakspeare. Meantime she hoped Master Howard would check Kate's evident propensity for exploring this pile of rubbish, from which, of course, she could gain nothing but harm to her mind, and dust upon her fingers.

Howard promised to forbid an indiscriminate perusal of these works, but often, when the more serious studies of the morning were ended, he gratified the taste alike of his pupil and of himself, by reading to her well selected passages from those literary treasures, which had yet to wait

another generation ere they received their meed of fame. The highly cultivated intellect of the good minister had, however, taught him to appreciate their poetic value; and his intimate knowledge of the human heart led him frequently to pause in wonder at the master-strokes, which could produce a portraiture of character, in cases as various as are the situations of life, alike in nothing but their spirit and truth—truth to *nature*. Such portraitures must stand the test of time and the lapse of centuries, unlike the cherished historical illusions, backed by a whole army of archives, and an innumerable host of unpublished State-Papers, which vanish one by one from before the eyes of the present generation. So esteeming our great bard, Howard would not withhold the perusal of his master-pieces from the intelligent girl, whose mind he was endeavouring to train to the admiration of everything great and good—often in itself a defence, from evil when higher principle fails.

But we have lingered long enough with the good clergyman and his fair pupil, whom we have taken this opportunity of introducing to our



reader to beguile his impatience during the absence of Pierre, which, he will remember, had for object, to procure the attendance of a leech, who should prescribe for our hero's somewhat precarious case.

Much conversation passed between the three assembled at supper, on the subject of the patient, in whom Kate had contrived deeply to interest her preceptor; for, with her usual warmth and ingenuousness, she had related to him the circumstances of the morning.

He could not disapprove of her conduct in obeying the common dictates of humanity, but cautioned her for the future, not to let the pursuit of any favourite lead her into transgressing her father's wish, that none of the family should pass the park-gate. More seriously he listened to her account of the stranger who had accosted Alice within the prescribed precincts. The house was situated in such a retired spot of country, in the depth of a valley so enclosed by woods, that few who were not acquainted with the locality would be likely to seek it; "and it is the more important at present," continued Howard, "that there should be no communication with the neighbour-

hood, since I find by a letter received to-day from your father, that several persons suspected of designs for fomenting disturbances amongst the people, and of strengthening the enemies of the government, are now abroad in the north. These people are more likely to succeed in imposing their pretensions upon the lower class of society, because they themselves belong to it, and have adopted, as I hear, in imitation of our covenanting neighbours, an evangelical cant, which ever takes with the vulgar. Will you believe, Kate, that your father's late steward, Haman, is now the spiritual guide of a large congregation, and esteemed a burning and shining light?"

"Impossible!" replied Kate; "for he could not read without assistance; and to cast accounts correctly, was, I have heard my father say, his only gift."

"Even less learning than you describe would avail him for his present vocation; for it requires little of eloquence, or book lore, to inspire the multitude with self-righteousness, or to inflate the passions of the ignorant. He is one of those who 'speak evil of the things they understand not.'"

“Yet did he not serve my father long and faithfully? And my old playmate, Lilius, tell me, dear sir, is she converted too?”

“I have heard nothing of his daughter; and as for Haman’s fidelity——”

But here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Pierre, who speedily made the Lady Clare comprehend that he had accomplished the object of his errand. She bade him introduce the professor of the healing art to her presence, and had risen to receive him with her stateliest bow, when, to the surprise of all present, there entered—no bustling and important disciple of Esculapius, mighty in the power of wielding the lancet, and mysterious in the science of compounding the drug—no such person was to be seen—but, with a self-possession all her own, and seemingly as if by no unexpected summons, calmly walked in a figure, hooded and cloaked, and shielded by every possible defence, either from the inclemency of the cold of evening, or from the risk of recognition by curious eyes.

She threw off, one by one, her multifarious accoutrements, and discovered the form of a female, somewhat aged, whose countenance, un-

relaxed in its expression, bore traces, nevertheless, at the present moment, of oppressing anxiety. Without appearing to notice the group amongst whom she was introduced, she advanced at once towards the Lady Clare, and said abruptly—

“Lead me to his chamber, lady—hasten—for there is no time to lose—and be careful that I meet none by the way: I must not be seen here.”

Startled at the tone of this address, so unusual towards herself, and offended in her ideas of propriety, the old lady collected her dignity, and replied with some haughtiness,

“Whoever you may be, good woman, I know not; nor for what purpose you have served yourself of the plea of this youth’s sickness to enter here; but whatever be your aim, rest assured that you cannot be more anxious to avoid communication with my household, than I that you should do so.”

“Peace, dame,” returned the other, “and hear me. I come to save the life of Albert Lyndesay; yes, that is the name of yon forsaken youth. I know him,—I know you all, and you are more in my power than you think for. Make haste, then, for each moment the fever gathers strength.

*I can save him,—for I was born to be his guardian genius,—and I will!*”

“Listen to me, woman!” interposed the clergyman, “and forbear this wild talk, which bespeaks little fitness to attend a feverish patient. I refrain at present from reproving your presumption, in arrogating to yourself the power to heal and to make alive, which belongs but to the Omnipotent; but before we commit to you the care of this youth’s malady, say, what motive brings you here, and whence is your knowledge in the healing art? and I entreat you answer me rationally.”

Ninon (for it was she) saw with her native acuteness that Howard doubted her sanity; and turning towards him, she said, with a quiet earnestness strangely at variance with her former incoherency,—

“Master Howard, you are a good man, and I honour you even for your rebuke. We serve the same God, and He, I trust, will judge us according to our motives. Mine I cannot explain further than this,—I come here to-night because I love this boy, and would gladly die to save him. I was his nurse; his foster-mother. My art in healing I learned in other lands. Further

questions it boots not to ask, for I answer none. And now, lady, for the love of Heaven, lead the way!"

The Lady Clare rose mechanically to obey, and Ninon, as she passed the spot where Kate sat wondering at the strange scene, passed her hand over the bright locks of the astonished girl, and with a fervent "God bless thee! maiden," vanished from the apartment.

"What a strange woman!" exclaimed Kate, the moment they were alone; "and why should she bless me?"

"Perhaps because you were the agent in restoring her foster-son to life," replied the clergyman. "Your act of humanity seems to have gained you one powerful friend, at any rate, if we are to believe her account of herself. I trust we may not find her alliance dangerous, but the jargon with which she first tried to carry her point, greatly resembles the ravings of those enthusiasts who are now deceiving thousands—themselves worst of all deceived."

"I feel disposed to like her, notwithstanding," observed Kate.

Howard looked at his pupil, and almost smiled, but said nothing in reply.

## CHAPTER VI.

Non so donde viene,  
Quel tenero affetto,  
Quel moto che ignoto  
Mi nasce nel petto;  
Quel gel che le vene  
Scorrendo mi va.—OLIMPIADE.

MEANWHILE, the Lady Clare, having satisfied herself that the servants of the house, without exception, were assembled in their hall for supper, took a taper, and silently led the way to the room where Albert lay. The restlessness of fever had now been succeeded by that state of torpor proceeding from exhaustion, which gives no refreshment to the wearied frame. In their way to the apartment they passed along a gallery hung with paintings, chiefly portraits, of various periods and yet more various degrees of merit. Before one of these Ninon made a halt. It

hung over the door of Albert's chamber, and the old lady, who had naturally supposed Ninon to be unacquainted with the house, and without information as to the apartment occupied by the patient, began to give her mysterious visitor credit for some of the supernatural powers she pretended to, when she descried her, turning towards this door, look upwards with an appearance of extreme excitement, and, crossing herself, utter words which the Lady Clare believed to convey an invocation to Heaven for assistance in her task.

The subject of the picture which caused the mistake, was a lovely and elegant woman, past the first bloom of youth, but retaining all the richness of her beauty. Her full dark eyes, and clear brown complexion, spoke of a climate more southerly than our own, and when Ninon clasped her hands together, and vented some exclamations in a foreign tongue, as she regarded the portrait, the beaming eyes of the figure seemed to look down upon her as in approbation.

The Lady Clare advanced towards the door, and opened it, saying,—“You appear to know the chamber, my good woman, without my guid-



ance, and perhaps you already are acquainted also with the state of your patient!"

Without seeming to regard her, the other exclaimed, "Holy Maria! that we should meet here! sainted lady, *ora pro nobis*."


The stately old lady imagined such parts of this invocation as she understood, to be addressed to herself, and wondering at the woman's incoherency, she prepared to watch her movements, that no risk might befall the invalid through her vagaries. Ninon had, however, willed it otherwise, for, turning to the old lady, she said,

"We must be alone. I only have the right to watch by this couch,—we shall all be here,—he, and I, and yon bright spirit, watching over us, and we will have the presence of none other, except, indeed, my—except that poor dumb boy,—leave him, my lady, and descend."

It was useless to combat one who showed by her manner that she would be obeyed; not to add that, during their short interview, the stranger had contrived to impress her companion with a sentiment very like fear. The Lady Clare, therefore, closed the door upon the extraordinary trio, whom fortune had thus thrown

together under her roof, albeit, with some misgiving, yet not without a feeling of release. As she paced the gallery, and descended the stairs, the old lady recalled the wild tales of glamourie and witchcraft which had held so predominating a sway in her younger days, but of which the more sober realities of later years had weakened the influence. Recalling, in her hour of need, the happy fact, that no sorcery could withstand the exorcism of certain words of Latin, or the presence of a copy of the Holy Scriptures, the venerable dame beheld herself armed at once by Howard's learning, and by her manifold possession of the sacred treasure, of which she carefully deposited a volume within sight of the chamber door—against the unlawful arts which she believed to have made their way on that night beneath her roof.

Had the Lady Clare remained within the chamber, she would probably have found, in the conduct of Ninon, subject wherewithal to strengthen her suspicions. On entering the room, the woman made a sign to Pierre to remain still, and herself cautiously advanced to a situation whence she could view the countenance of the youth without



being observed. His cheek was flushed with the bright hue of fever, and his dark locks were scattered on the pillow, as he lay motionless, in apparently deep sleep, disturbed only by a hurried and unequal breathing, and an occasional struggle and start. Something in the attitude or the expression struck the fancy of Ninon, for she started back, and once more returning to the entrance of the apartment, viewed the picture which hung there long and intently.

Then suddenly recollecting herself, she muttered, "But time flies, and delirium is at hand; and my boy, the living image, needs help while I idly contemplate the dead. Forgive me, lady. Yet softly; have I not said he should not see me save on the eve of some change in heart or fortune? Ha! did I predict well this last time!—is the change already come in heart as well as fortune? That fair young maiden yonder! 'twas she, they say, who saved him. But now to the body's cure—the rest remains with heaven."

As she uttered these reflections, or rather thus thought aloud, she took a station, in accordance with her intention of remaining unseen, behind the shadow of the curtain, whence she could reach

the invalid unnoticed, and taking his hand, which lay extended on the bed, she started at its extreme heat.

“Hasten, Pierre; uncover the arm, that I may pierce the vein,” she exclaimed, at the same time drawing from her pocket a small probe which was to serve on this occasion, as it had done on many previous ones, the purposes of a lancet.

The operation, of course, awoke the patient; but the woman had so placed the light, and arranged her own position, that the feeble and languid young man was aware of the presence of none but Pierre, who held his arm, from which the blood flowed freely. Faintness succeeded—no longer the result of heated blood and a reeling brain, but that quiet, tranquil exhaustion which, ending in repose, is the sure prelude to convalescence.

Believing him to be in a swoon, the old woman imprinted kiss after kiss on his forehead, as she used every means to revive him; and when at length she detected the low, gentle breathing, she threw herself on her knees by the bed, and with uplifted hands poured forth a fervent thanksgiving.

“Oh save this boy! holy mother of God! save his precious life,” she exclaimed aloud, “and pardon me—for the sake of her who there watches over him—pardon me if for him I seem that I am not; if I listen to things I abhor; if to serve—to guard him—to watch his fortunes—I assume a character which is a mockery; yet witness for me, blessed Mary! I but mock the mockers—deceive the deceivers. For the sin (if such it be) fast and penance shall atone when my charge is ended—when the spell is broken which binds me to this orphan’s destiny. To the holy Maria I vow the remnant of life.”

She ceased, and rising, proceeded to recite over her apparently insensible patient, the French dog-grel, which to her wayward fancy constituted a charm; and which certainly acted with the power of one upon herself, disturbing at all times, when recalled, the equilibrium of her otherwise clear and comprehensive brain. This done, after a long and ardent gaze, she abruptly left the chamber.

The patient, who was not altogether unconscious, though he lay motionless with eyes fast closed, had heard her words, and, ignorant from whom they proceeded, yet comprehended sufficient

to lay to heart the flattering unction that he had at least one friend on earth. After reflection served to convince him that this could be no other than Ninon, but as he saw her not again for years, he had no other means of ascertaining her identity, than the faint impression which her language had made upon him.

The page followed her from the room, and a lengthened whispering ensued in the gallery, which ended by Pierre's return to watch by his couch. Of whatever might have succeeded, our hero was not aware, for he sank into a deep sleep.

The Lady Clare and her two companions awaited long and anxiously the descent of Ninon from the chamber above; and to beguile the time, the old lady related various and manifold stories of sorcery, witchcraft, and magic, illustrated and adorned after the fashion of the day, so that at length she succeeded in working up the feelings of her granddaughter to that state of excitement, which lays even the strongest minds open to an impression, we will not say an apprehension, of the supernatural.

Howard essayed a few words to counteract the

effect which he saw was produced upon Kate's imagination, and, to put an end to the nervous suspense which the expectation of Ninon's re-entrance had occasioned, owing to the Lady Clare's account of her mysterious proceedings, the good clergyman walked up stairs, and rapping gently at the door of Albert's apartment, inquired whether the patient had been relieved. He was answered by Pierre, who merely pointed to Lyndesay as he slept, and, with his finger on his lips, enjoined silence.

Howard looked round for Ninon, but fruitlessly; and in answer to his inquiries, Pierre only shook his head, as if at a loss for his meaning, then relapsed into a state of apparent stupor. In vain Howard traversed the gallery and the corridors in search of the woman. From Alice, the only domestic whom the lateness of the hour had not driven to repose, he received a negative to his vague inquiry, "Whether she had heard any one leave the house." He returned to the ladies, somewhat less confident than before leaving them on the character of Ninon, who, he had asserted, in reply to the Lady Clare's suspicions, was doubtless a weak or wily woman, who, having

gained some repute for leechcraft, sought to increase her consequence by the affectation of superhuman skill.

The manner of her leaving the house, however, thus stealthily and silently, and without claiming any reward for her services, shook his opinion on this point. Not that he entertained for a moment the belief of her supernatural powers, but he was led to suspect that she had some object in visiting that abode, (as it appeared it was not the first time,) besides that of aiding the sick man; and he feared that she was leagued with those, who were known to entertain no friendly disposition towards the noble house, of which the ladies, his companions, were members.

Like many unsuspecting persons, Howard, now that he did suspect, suspected wrong.

Of course all reasoning was henceforth ineffectual in eradicating from the minds of his female auditors, the impression that something very mysterious and fearful was involved, alike in the abrupt appearance, and unnoticed exit, of the being who had that night presented herself to their notice. No vestige remained by which to trace her, she having carefully removed her multifarious wrap-



pings on leaving the apartment: and an attempt at eliciting information from Pierre was equally unsuccessful; he either could not make them comprehend his suggestions, or resolved himself to take refuge in stupidity.

Howard advising that they should retire, his pupil tremblingly took her lamp, and as she passed along the gallery, full of apprehension, and starting at every sound, involuntarily she raised her eyes in the direction of the picture which hung over the entrance to Albert's chamber, and which her grandmother had described as having attracted the attention of Ninon. As her glance met the full dark eyes of the portrait, something in the expression of the latter struck her, which she had never perceived before: there was a life, an animation, as she thought, new, and they looked upon herself as, it seemed to her, other eyes very like them had looked not long before.

Though still full of wonder and perplexity, she ceased to feel anything like fear, as she continued gazing on those pensive and liquid orbs. She recalled, too, the kind words of Ninon to herself; and if her dreams that night were less composed

than ordinary, they presented not to her imagination aught beyond mortal ken.

The next morning found the patient considerably refreshed, and apparently out of danger ; so that the Lady Clare consented to his receiving a visit from Howard in his apartment, a privilege she had denied on the preceding day. Albert quickly learned to appreciate the pious and exalted character of the good clergyman, and, as far as extreme weakness would permit, availed himself of the enjoyment afforded by his society. Howard, on the other hand, at first cautious and guarded in his intercourse with our hero, owing to the apparent character of those who seemed his associates, could not long resist the manly frankness of Lyndesay, as, with that ready confidence in his companion's good faith which is always so winning to the party trusted, the young man related all he knew of his own history, and explained, as far as he was able, the circumstances of his association with Ninon. The retrospect, in many respects melancholy, brought tears into the eyes of his auditor, and Howard's kindly nature was soon deeply interested in the youthful and solitary being before him ; parentless and

and friendless, and although nurtured amidst affluence and splendour, destined henceforward to depend entirely on the precarious favour of a monarch, who could hardly be expected to take a personal interest in one so obscure and unpretending.

With the straight-forward simplicity of his character, Howard counselled our hero to avoid all intercourse with persons, who, like Ninon, might cover designs of drawing him into associations prejudicial to his loyalty by an appearance of friendly interest and sympathy. Albert's heart told him that *this* suspicion at least was misdirected; nevertheless, he valued the kind counsel of his monitor, and as their intercourse proceeded from day to day, he learned to attach a still higher value to his friendship and advice.

And he was accustomed in after years to look back to the period spent in that lonely mansion, as the era from which he could date the decision of most of those opinions, as well as sentiments, which influenced his future life.

On the eighth morning from the day of his wound, he was so far recovered as to be able to leave his apartment, a change which he had

ardently desired before, but which had been absolutely prohibited by his careful nurse. He quitted his chamber, leaning on the arm of Pierre, who since the night of Ninon's visit had been indefatigable, and even affectionate, in his attendance upon him; and as they slowly proceeded along the gallery so frequently alluded to, Albert fancied that he heard the sound of voices, blended in the tones of some sacred air, and, forgetting the infirmity of his guide, hastily inquired whence the harmony proceeded. After a moment's pause he recollected himself, and entreated Pierre to conduct him in the direction of the chaunt.

We feel it our duty to state our fears, that on this occasion our hero was influenced less by a love of sacred music, than by a latent hope that the maiden who had occupied his thoughts during the tedious hours of recovery, but whose name he had not dared to utter in conversation with her relative or friend, might bear a part in the sweet concert to which he was prepared to listen.

It was, then, with some surprise, that on arriving at the opposite extremity of the gallery, he found the music suddenly cease; and on Pierre's opening

a heavy low-arched door, he entered into an antique and venerable chapel. Here, engaged in the beautiful daily service appointed by our Church, were assembled the small household of the Lady Clare; herself and her granddaughter occupying the gallery into which their guest now entered. At the moment that he did so, the congregation were on their knees, and if Kate raised her head to take a rapid glance at the intruder, she as rapidly averted it, and fixed, or seemed to fix, her attention on the service.

Albert heard her low and clear voice as she joined in the response to the petition uttered at the moment of his entrance——

“From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion; from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism——,” and the fervent “Good Lord, deliver us!” fell upon his ear with a solemnity unknown before; and he felt that in such daily prayers must rest England’s best and surest hopes.

The primitive and pious custom of thus complying with the Church’s appointments, was then rapidly falling into disuse; but here and there a little band was found, whose supplications, offered according to the revealed will of their

Maker, though not destined to avert the hour of woe, were doubtless registered in heaven, for the Church's ultimate benefit, as well as their own individual blessing.

Once again Lyndesay was struck by the deep emphasis with which the minister pronounced a part of the service,—an emphasis which seemed equally to pervade the response. It was in that prayer which invokes wisdom from on high, for “the Lords of the Privy Council.”

The service terminated; and the two ladies with their visitor found themselves again in the picture gallery. As Kate had not met our hero since the day when he was carried almost senseless to his chamber, she hardly could believe in the identity of the very handsome young stranger, who now stood before her, awaiting her recognition.

Much reduced by sickness, his slender figure had not, however, suffered in its proportions; and perhaps our female readers will agree in the opinion, (which the young lady formed for her own private edification,) namely, that the paleness of the cheek added rather to the interest of the expressive countenance, and heightened the effect of the classic brow. She advanced at once frankly,

and with a slight blush offered her hand, saying at the same time,—

“ I trust Master Lyndesay has recovered from the effects of his accident.”

Albert eagerly grasped the hand thus offered, then, half embarrassed at having done so, he replied in a tone of deep respect,—“ You are too good to concern yourself for one who is already overpowered by the debt he owes you; but, add to it, by teaching me how to express my thanks. You saved my life, and I would welcome the opportunity of laying it down for you.”

Kate felt what all must feel who have saved the life of a fellow creature, or who have been the instruments of his welfare in any vital point, that there is henceforth an irresistible bond of sympathy between the two, which supplies a mutual attraction, even beyond the ties of long-tried intimacy. With her wonted gaiety, however, she shook off the impression, as she replied,—

“ Pray keep it for better purposes, Master Lyndesay; you will find plenty of occasions for disposing of what you seem to value so little. In truth, I never can comprehend the benefit our friends

propose to confer on us, when they talk of laying down their lives in our service. Much better, it seems to me, that they should keep them, and act the useful and agreeable in our behalf."

"You do not then," asked Albert, "suppose the possibility of exigencies in which these useful and agreeable qualities might be annihilated, or unfitted for the occasion?"

"Why, now you are talking something like, Master Howard. I conclude you are giving me the result of your meditations during the last few days. All I have to say on the subject, (which I own has never had my serious consideration,) is, that since you *are* returned to this lower world, and to the brilliant society of this house, I beg you will resume those before-mentioned qualities, which, as you say, when in a fever or a swoon, might be both annihilated, and unfitted for the occasion."

"I fear you will find me but little gifted with them at any time," resumed Albert, slightly colouring. He leaned as he spoke upon the shoulder of Pierre, for his small store of strength was rapidly failing. His young companion looked in his face, and marked the quick changes in its



hue. Hesitating, yet with a manner which seemed resolved *not* to be bashful, she drew from her bosom a little bouquet of sweet-scented herbs,—rosemary, mignonette, and lavender, grouped together with some fresh rose-buds, and presenting them to Albert, she said,—

“ Perhaps you will like the scent of these sweet plants.—Nay, do not thank me, Master Lyndesay; I beg to assure you, they were by no means gathered on your behalf.”

Being desired not to thank, our hero obeyed as far as words were concerned; but the animated glance which he turned upon the maiden, as he gently took the flowers from her hand, spoke sufficiently.

In silence they proceeded along the gallery, and as they passed the chamber in which Albert had lain, they were surprised by an exclamation from the Lady Clare.

“ Wonderful! and it is no fancy after all!—exactly the eyes—the complexion—the same high brow—yet she never had a son—and her brother, I have heard her say, was dead, and childless!”

Surprised at this effusion, both Lyndesay and his fair companion turned round, and following

the direction of her eyes, raised theirs towards the picture. As he did so Albert became deadly pale, and, unable longer to support himself, he sank into a chair.

“Who—who is she?—Dear lady, tell me,” he said, as the Lady Clare turned an inquiring look upon him; “assuredly I have seen her, or some one so like that—but no, I cannot be mistaken.”

“Pray inform me, sir, when and where you believe to have met the original of this picture, and I will make you acquainted with her name,” said the old lady, resuming the precision of manner which a slight emotion had disturbed.

“*Where* I know not, but a scene through which I have lately travelled reminds me of the place; and the period when I saw her was in my early childhood, which must account for my dim recollection of the locality and circumstances of our interview. Were I to relate them to you, they would seem like some wild dream.”

As the young man said this, he buried his face in his hands, and seemed to be collecting some scattered recollections. The sigh which accompanied this movement, indicated that they were not of the most cheering, and it did not pass un-

observed by his companions. Greatly as the curiosity of both ladies was roused, they possessed that instinctive good-breeding, which revolted from gratifying it at the expense of another's feeling. Seeing that the topic was painful, the Lady Clare merely observed,—

“We will not recur to the subject, Master Lyndesay. The picture which hangs there, is a portrait of the Lady Isabelle d'Amville, of whom probably, you, who have been bred in Scotland, never heard. Suffer me, however, to ask you one question, which, I trust may not be intrusive. Are you allied to any branch of the house of Hamilton?”

“No, God forbid!” replied the youth, “for the head of that house, as I much fear, will ere long be found a traitor?”

“It is not of him I would speak,” said the old lady, in a tone of disappointment. “However it is equal as regards yourself; the resemblance must be accidental. But,” resumed she, after a few moments' pause,—“your words sound strangely, and I would fain hope falsely, as having been misinformed with respect to the noble Marquis of Hamilton. Much your report concerns me,

for on the favour of Queen Henrietta depends at present the protection of one whom I regard with nearly a parent's love, the niece to the marquis, and in sooth, a maiden worthy of love, Mistress Margaret Hamilton."

As the Lady Clare said this, she turned her eyes on Kate, whose disturbed look met hers. A moment afterwards, however, the latter exclaimed,

"But we have nothing to fear. If all the uncles in the world be traitors, the King is true, and on his promise we may rely!"

Albert Lyndesay silently remarked the deep interest with which these words were uttered; an interest which, with the manner of expression, seemed to render their application almost personal to the speakers. The subject, however, was dropped, and they descended to breakfast.

The morning meal was laid in a spacious and lofty hall, common in all houses of that date, which occupied the centre of the edifice, and from which a glazed door opened, by a broad flight of steps, to the terrace. This, as we have said, was of gravel, and the prospect, having for its nearest object, the trim and formal parterre,

extended through the grassy glade formed by one of the noble avenues which we have described.

The hall was wainscotted with oak, and adorned with a few old portraits. The furniture, by no means of recent date, was massive and heavy, inviting, however, to an invalid, from its promise of repose; and our hero, exhausted with the slight fatigues of the morning, was happy to ensconce himself amongst its deep cushions.

Howard joined the party, and after a cheerful meal, the Lady Clare, with an air of mystery, announced that she had a few words for the private ear of her guest, and directed her granddaughter to proceed to her tapestry work.

Kate obeyed, and Howard also, taking the hint, left the apartment.

## CHAPTER VII.

Oh! there is a dream of early youth,  
And it never comes again :  
'Tis a vision of light, and life, and truth,  
And it flits across the brain :  
And love is the theme of that early dream,  
So bright, so warm, so new,  
That in all our after life, I deem,  
That pleasing dream we sue.—ANON.

“PRAY be seated, Master Lyndesay,” said the old lady, politely, as the door closed upon their companions; for Albert, who had risen at her previous remark, had approached, and was standing opposite to her chair. “I have a few words to say to you, but will not be tedious.”

She erected her figure, with the air of a sovereign princess about to give an audience, and continued with dignity,—

“You may possibly have experienced some surprise that since you became an inmate of this

dwelling, you have remained in ignorance of the names of those, who have had the honour and pleasure of entertaining you?"

"In my case, dear and honoured lady," replied the young man, "I could but feel as the way-faring man towards the good Samaritan, to whom, whether of his own nation or another, he owed his all. Yet I own a curiosity, and if I may so presume to express it, a deep interest, in knowing who are the generous hosts to whom I am so deeply indebted."

"And therefore, Master Lyndesay, foreseeing such a sentiment, I was induced to seek this interview. I believe you, sir, by all I hear from Master Howard, and from my own observation, to be a gentleman and a man of principle, and I have every reason to hope that a promise would be to you binding as an oath. There are reasons—the same which have induced myself and my granddaughter to retire for a time to this secluded spot—which make it desirable that the place of our retreat should not be known. On that account strangers have hitherto been excluded from it, and since accident gave us the privilege of your society, I have to request that you will

abstain from every attempt to ascertain that which you have just confessed a curiosity to know ; —and that after quitting this roof, which” (continued the old dame, with a courteous inclination of the head) “I hope you will defer as long as may be possible, you will endeavour to forget your reception here ; and never, by means of word, or deed, provoke or satisfy inquiry upon the subject. During the continuance of these unhappy hostilities, our situation here, if known, might be one of risk and danger, to say the least. Should happier times succeed, let us hope that our future recognition will be rendered no less agreeable, from the little mystery which must at present attend our intercourse and parting.”

Having delivered herself of this somewhat lengthy oration, the old lady settled herself at ease in her chair, and crossed her arms before her with a sedate composure, awaiting a reply.

Had an ice-bolt shot across the heart of Albert Lyndesay, he could hardly have been more suddenly chilled than by her words. At once he saw his gratitude and honour engaged in forbearing to make any attempt at renewing his intercourse with the family, in which he had already interested



himself yet more than he had suspected before the present proof—nay, he was to pledge himself to remain voluntarily in ignorance of their very name!

Yet how to avoid giving this promise? The Lady Clare had doubtless a right to demand it, from one who had no claim upon her hospitality but that which his own helpless situation had offered.

He hesitated, and the thought meanwhile crossed his mind, that the doubtful position which he at present held, might be the cause of the Lady Clare's anxiety to avoid associating her own name and her granddaughter's, with that of an adventurer whose political party (a test with her and her family, evidently of the last importance) had not been proved in any way to afford them satisfaction, and whose rank was doubtful. He therefore hastily replied,

"I cannot, indeed, be surprised, dear madam, at your requiring this pledge from one who is, as yet, a perfect stranger to you, though honoured by your hospitality. Permit me then to make you a party to my history and circumstances, as far as I myself can unravel them. Would to God I had a tale to tell less mysterious and uncertain!"

"It is needless, Master Lyndesay," she said. "I have already heard from good Master Howard all that you are about to communicate; and permit me to say, that if even your own bearing had not inspired me with confidence, that recital and the likeness you bear to a dear friend of mine now dead, would have excited, on my part, a lively interest in you. I therefore the more regret that I am compelled to exact this promise, which renders the renewal of our acquaintance so doubtful. I owe it to him who has committed that young maiden to my care, to require such a pledge from an uninvited guest; and I pray you, without demur, to give it."

She ceased speaking; but her manner was so urgent, and her tone so serious, that Lyndesay could no longer withhold the word, which seemed, once parted from his lips, to exclude him from the presence of Kate for ever. With an impatient gesture he raised his hand to his brow, and brushed aside the hair, as if his vision had been impeded by it. No new perceptions seemed to open upon him through this avenue, however, by which to extricate himself from his present dilemma; and in answer to a look of appeal from his somewhat

astonished and distressed, he at length uttered despairingly,—

“Madam! you have my promise!”

Quite unconscious of the pain she had inflicted, the old lady arose; and adding with polite formality, “I thank you, sir,—it is no more than I expected of you,” she quitted the room.

Left to himself, our hero's reflections were none of the most agreeable. During the short interval which the morning's meal had afforded, he had realized all the visions, which memory and imagination had presented to him during his illness, respecting the young lady, whose charms, both of person and demeanor, had received such additional interest from her generous efforts in his own behalf. This interest was not diminished by the circumstance, accidental of course, that his eyes, when directed towards her, met her own more than once, engaged, as it appeared, in a similar scrutiny, from which, on the rencontre, they were hastily withdrawn. But it was natural, as he argued to himself, that in her retired mode of life, the acquisition of a stranger to the party, and a stranger so circumstanced, should excite her curiosity.

That the opportunities still to be enjoyed, before his yet but half completed recovery could by possibility enable him to pursue his journey, might serve to establish an intimacy, which should give him something like a claim to its own renewal, had been his fond day-dream,—as, apparently occupied during the breakfast in attentions to the Lady Clare, and in acknowledgments (sometimes) rather beside the mark) of the remarks and questions which Howard thought fit to address to him, he had appeared to these two absolutely unconscious that any other, save themselves, was present. Suddenly all these hopes had vanished before the Lady Clare's words, and what was worse, he could blame no one for the fact, since he alone was unreasonable in having formed them.

What claim, indeed, had he upon the continued acquaintance of these ladies? was it not enough that they treated him with confidence and cordiality, when by accident he became their inmate?

Then came the question, Who could they be? This occupied his thoughts for very long; since, though prohibited from interrogating others upon

the subject, he was not bound to refrain from pursuing his own surmises,—the prohibition, on the contrary, furnishing additional incitement to the inquiry. He recalled every look, word, and gesture, which had escaped either of the ladies or their friend,—and, strange to say, he arrived at the conclusion, so strong in his own mind as to amount to certainty, that Kate was no other than the Margaret Hamilton, concerning whom the Lady Clare had spoken so affectionately and so earnestly in the picture gallery. The glance which the old lady had directed, as she uttered the name, towards her granddaughter,—if, indeed, Kate really held such a relation to her, (and of that fact Albert now doubted, for when we once discover that much exists which is withheld from us, we frequently make reprisals by believing nothing at all,)—and the tone in which the young girl had answered the remarks of the other, betrayed, he thought, an interest in the subject nothing less than personal. If then Kate, by whatever name, were about to be placed at the Court of Queen Henrietta, was it not possible he might meet her again under circumstances which would release him from his pledge?

and was there any occasion to be so very despairing? or to keep so strict a guard over his conduct and feelings as he had decided ten minutes before to be his only conscientious course?

Seizing upon this new idea, and never once questioning the truth of his surmises, our hero presently wrought himself into a far more complacent state of mind. Hardly twenty, and introduced for the first time into the society of a lovely young girl, whom circumstances rendered doubly interesting to him, can we wonder if the first approach of the blind deity obscured in some degree the usual clearness of his perception and judgment?

Alternately piqued at having suffered the promise to be extorted from him, and triumphant at his imagined discovery (by which he hoped the old lady might eventually be outwitted) his reflections, as he lay extended upon a fauteuil, must have lasted far above an hour. What they finally became remains uncertain, as they were dispelled when the object of all this cogitation herself entered, bearing a huge frame of tapestry work. She seemed surprised at finding him

alone, and, as he hastened to relieve her of her burden, inquired where was her grandmother.

“She left the room, Mistress Margaret—I crave your pardon—Mistress Kate, about half an hour since—or, may be, more, for I have not noted time—after compelling me to give her a promise which I regret more than I dare to express.

“Indeed! you look rather perplexed. Pray what might my grandmother require of you? Did she ask you to draw out a fair copy of our pedigree up to the Conquest, with a rough sketch of the family history from the time of the Romans in Gaul? or did she enlist your services to count the stitches of her tapestry, and to calculate what proportion it was fair to give to each of the vessels of the Spanish Armada? or may be, worse than all, she coaxed you into an attempt to unravel her embroidery silks, by way of amusement during your confinement to the sofa?”

“None of these—the Lady Clare was so far from wishing that I should contribute to enlighten others on the subject of your family and descent, that she seems to consider it of vital importance that neither should be revealed to myself.”

"Which of course has excited your curiosity the more," returned the young lady. "And now tell me, what conjectures have you amused yourself by forming, with respect to us?"

"I am prohibited from expressing them," said Lyndesay, somewhat piqued at her tone of easy indifference; "but if this mystery be a mere farce, the amusement is altogether on your side."

"Now fie upon you! Master Lyndesay, for a recreant knight! to stand there looking like no knight whatever, save him of the rueful countenance; when fortune transports you all unexpectedly into an enchanted castle, where you find a distressed damsel, under the spell of a wicked enchantress, who, forthwith, lays her wand upon your own tongue, and charms it into silence. Seriously, though," she added in a less rapid manner, "is this the promise which has caused you such annoyance?"

"Involving, as it does, the impossibility of all future efforts at expressing my sense of obligation, or indeed, at learning to whom I owe it, the feeling, Mistress Hamilton, need hardly surprise you," coldly returned Lyndesay, for he was vexed that she should apply the word "annoyance" to



feelings which he had called by a much more romantic name.

The young lady was silent and thoughtful for a few minutes, then said, "You have addressed me now by the name of Hamilton, and previously by that of Margaret. Strange! since you cannot have heard me called by either! Tell me—are you acquainted—are you—intimate with any lady who bears those two conjointly?"

"No—yes—that is, I am not sure, but I believe so," said our hero, who had hazarded the experiment by way of trial, and who narrowly watched the countenance of his companion, in which, however, he detected no emotion save surprise at his own incoherency. The embarrassment was thus all on his side, and it could not escape even Kate's unsuspicious observation.

"Pardon me, Master Lyndesay, if I have asked you a delicate question," resumed she. "I myself am so deeply interested in a person so called, of whom my grandmother spoke to you this morning, that I was curious to inquire who was the friend whose image was so constantly present with you, that you could not address a lady but her name instinctively rose to your lips."

Kate spoke this rather archly, and with an air of the most perfect unconcern; yet, somehow, she was disposed to be not quite pleased at Albert's emotion and manner, on the mention of this unknown. She was silent; and Lyndesay, after a short pause, persisting in his error, and mistaking her meaning, again addressed her.

"Since I have unhappily blundered so far as to excite your remark, may I ask you to favour me with your wishes, as to the name by which I may address you, — and think of you, — for a stranger may not presume to the use of the familiar household language so endearing amongst friends and relatives."

This formal appeal, uttered with an air of earnestness, was too much for the gravity of the gay-hearted girl, and she burst into a fit of laughter.

"Pardon me, Master Lyndesay," she said, at length, "and, henceforth, I pray you, address me as Mistress Margaret Hamilton. The owner of the name would, I am sure, lend it me for an occasion. Besides, to yourself, the appellation is evidently the most familiar and natural!"

There might be a slight pique in the tone



in which the latter sentence was spoken; but it was unobserved by Albert, who was startled by the *nonchalance* with which his fair companion bade him call her by the very name he believed she was studiously bent upon concealing from him. If this were done with the intention of deluding him, it was the very perfection of acting; but how could that ingenuous countenance sustain its part in the deceit, without a sign of embarrassment?

Long they remained silent, neither perhaps quite satisfied with the other, and both experiencing a slight disappointment at their mutual doubts. Kate bent over her tapestry frame, with an appearance of redoubled interest in the shades of Andromache's golden tresses. When, at length, she raised her eyes, she encountered those of Lyndesay, fixed upon her with an earnestness which seemed bent upon reading her very soul. She started, for she had imagined him occupied in a reverie upon objects far distant, and, with a forced laugh, she asked him if he admired the view from the windows.

He turned towards them for a second, and answered with a cold assent, then, making an

effort to rise from the sofa, he advanced towards the place which Kate occupied, and stood watching her busy fingers, as the ready needle flew between them. This was a step towards renewed conversation, and the young lady, profiting by it, inquired whether he could guess the subject of the scene she was portraying.

Albert smiled, and, pointing to the wavy curls of Hector's spouse, remarked that he had never yet read or heard of the heroine, whose description precisely accorded with that of the figure before him.

With evident surprise, and not without a blush, Kate became alive to the fact to which her attention was directed,—namely, that instead of the rich golden browns she had selected for Andromache's coiffure, she had, in her abstraction, introduced the greens intended for her girdle. It was the work of a minute to take out the verdant lock of hair, and, with a gay laugh, to rate herself for her own blunder, though she declared she was in the habit of making such every day. Again she blushed, however, and Albert, welcoming that indubitable mark of

genuine feeling, wondered how he could, for a moment before, have doubted her perfect truth.

Was it wonderful, if in the hours and days of intercourse which succeeded,—intercourse, from which ceremony was at once banished, by the situation of the parties, and by the accident which had reduced our hero to a degree of weakness, which rendered him for a time entirely dependent upon the good offices of others,—was it wonderful, if his fair companion, whose feeling heart prompted her unaffectedly to render him those good offices, on her part forgot the impression she had received, in their first conversation, from his inexplicable manner at the mention of another?


Youth rapidly springs onward from budding affection to unbounded trust; and though the allusions which had occurred were not really obliterated from her mind, and were ready to appear again there on the slightest provocation, yet they had ceased to hold any place in her thoughts, as she became more and more absorbed in the present enjoyment of his society. She felt that this enjoyment was mutual, and she

was too happy, and too inexperienced, to ask why.

It never occurred to the Lady Clare, that her duty was to check the intimacy which daily increased between these two young people; as she considered her granddaughter a mere child, and approved of her humanity towards a suffering invalid, in which light she regarded Albert.

Howard, it is true, thought occasionally, in the course of his instructions to Kate, that her mind seemed singularly preoccupied, and it even struck him once that there might be danger in a continuance of such constant and intimate association; but, as he saw Lyndesay daily recovering, and was aware that his convalescence must be the signal for what would probably be a final separation, he saw no reason for apprehension as to his pupil's future peace of mind. In this his judgment erred, but, deeply as he had dived into the human heart, he had not known, by dearly bought experience, the turnings and windings of that one passion, which baffles all theory, and defies all common rules.

So they read, and talked, and laughed, and sang together, and each in turn became a pupil



in the peculiar line in which the other possessed superior proficiency; and as Albert gained strength, they wandered through the well-wooded environs of the mansion, without any interruption from without; and whilst Lyndesay's gentleness and courtesy won him the favourable regards of the old lady, and his sound sense and cultivated intellect rendered him at all times a welcome companion to Howard, he was inspiring the heart of Kate with one of those deep and undying attachments, which, when acquired so early in life, become even a part of the character, and, associated with a high and unquenched spirit, like that of our heroine, gain strength inwardly in proportion as they are outwardly disguised. Candid and simple as was her character, no sooner had this new sentiment found entrance, than she felt that for her the unlimited confidence of childhood was passed by. Henceforth she had feelings which she dared not betray—a secret in her heart which none must penetrate.

This it is which causes the character of every woman to be, essentially, to a certain degree, veiled; for, however there may be instances of exception to the rule, it is certain that her very

nature revolts from exposing the germs of a growing attachment to the remarks of another, even though that other be a sister.

None therefore detected in the sparkling eye and brilliant cheek, the heartfelt laugh and quick retort, with which Kate continued to inspire liveliness in all around her, the change which had taken place in her heart. Only once, when at the expiration of about three weeks, the nearly re-established health of Lyndesay caused him to allude to his approaching departure, did her countenance suddenly turn pale; but the emotion passed away, and she presently inquired with seeming indifference where was his destination on leaving the mansion.

"I shall proceed to York, as I had purposed before my—my accident," said he; "that happy misfortune without which I should never have known you."

"Then you have really decided upon loyalty?" said the young lady, without noticing the latter part of the remark.

"Certainly; did I ever give you reason to doubt my sincerity?"

"Perhaps not; yet I have seen you waver once



or twice on smaller subjects, so believed you might hover between conflicting inclinations even in this. Shame on me for saying it! but I own in your case I should find irresistible attractions on both sides."

"How!" exclaimed Lyndesay, "you, whom I hear constantly speaking of the King in terms such as a daughter would use of a father! Could I hear you aright?"

"Quite right: but you probably will not understand the force of my motives, which I confess are not founded upon very deep political reasons. The argument for the rebel cause is simply admiration of your great and glorious countryman, the Earl of Montrose."

"He is indeed a hero in every respect," returned Albert, "and I yield to none in admiration of his genius; but I cannot understand why his perversion of Heaven's best gifts, to serve a cause in itself unjustifiable, ought to influence me to follow his example."

"You speak like a philosopher, that I cannot deny—and I like a foolish girl—yet I must confess that it would be my glory to follow devotedly the banner of such a leader; to obey implicitly

the commands emanating from such a master mind !”

“ You seem enthusiastic on this subject,” drily observed our hero.

“ So much so, that were I a soldier, I could joyfully lay down my life under him, to obtain an approving look—provided always that he were fighting in a right cause.”

“ Which I need not remind you is not the case. But pray,” thoughtfully continued Lyndesay, “ are your prejudices in favour of Montrose merely the result of his general fame for courage and gallantry? or have you possessed means of becoming acquainted with his character beyond what rumour affords to all?”

“ That is to say, do I know him personally,” playfully rejoined the young lady; “ in answer to which very serious inquiry I have the honour to inform you that I do; and my prejudices, as you are pleased to call them, took root almost in infancy, when the earl’s indulgent reception of my childish admiration won my heart.

“ He was highly favoured; and is he conscious that he still retains possession of such a treasure?”

“ Possibly he may be,” said Kate, laughing, “ as

although of late I have seen him but for short intervals, I believe he frequently hears of my unshaken constancy. I have here a ballad of his composition, which is much at your service if you are curious to know his style—shall I sing it to you?”

Any other than a lover would have seen in Kate's unembarrassed air while speaking on this subject, as well as her willingness to part with the autograph, her total freedom from any feeling in regard to Montrose which need have caused uneasiness to the most captious suitor. Albert, however, whose modesty instantly instituted a comparison between his own pretensions and those of the object of her panegyric, most disadvantageous to himself, concluded at once that her words carried the extinction of all hope.

Coldly, therefore, and almost bitterly, he declined the proffered manuscript, which from any other hand he would have eagerly accepted, adding in the same tone,

“To one who acknowledges her heart so entirely occupied with an individual image, the entertainment of so dull a companion as myself must needs be tedious, and I will relieve her

almost instantly from the task. If not presuming too much, however, I would beg, before we part, an explanation of the charge Mistress Hamilton was pleased but now to lay against me, of wavering and inconstancy."

Kate's quick spirit rose at his altered tone, and prompted her to content herself with simply answering,—

"Master Lyndesay's hesitation as to whether he should pursue or abandon the attempt at recovering some small trinket, which he had lost in his late encounter, has been sufficiently obvious, and nothing but the utter hopelessness of the pursuit appears to have decided him to proceed at once to a nobler field of action. The same uncertainty has attended his arrangements as to the time of departure from hence, Master Lyndesay having announced to me that he should bid us farewell to-morrow, whereas my maid informed me not an hour ago, that he had answered her inquiries on the subject, by positively declaring his intention of resuming his journey to-night."

Offended in turn, and perhaps justly, at an accusation which, though originally uttered in jest, seemed now to be converted into a grave

charge against him, on grounds the most trifling, Lyndesay replied,—

“For the jewel, Mistress Margaret, you know not its value and importance, and may your hopes in life never rest on so fragile a tenure! From the other instance of my indecision I will at any rate relieve you, by fixing my departure for this evening, and I go forthwith to make my acknowledgments to the Lady Clare. May I once more seek yourself, to say farewell?”

The young lady turned abruptly away, and Albert, at a loss how to construe her manner, left the apartment.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Prithee, forgive me ;  
I did but chide in jest, the best loves use it  
Sometimes ; it sets an edge upon affection.  
When we invite our best friends to a feast,  
'Tis not all sweetmeats that we set before 'em ;  
There's something sharp and salt, both to whet appetite,  
And make 'em taste their wine well : so, methinks,  
After a friendly, sharp, and savoury chiding,  
A kiss tastes wondrous well, and full o' the grape.

*Tragedy*,—WOMEN, BEWARE WOMEN.

OUR last chapter concluded somewhat unsatisfactorily, and the present finds the heroine of our tale still in the saloon, which her lover had quitted in a mood so dismal, with the intention of first seeking Howard.

No sooner was Kate alone, than she gave way to the full tide of grief which his concluding words had awakened, but which she had turned away to conceal. To part in a few hours, and without

hope of their ever meeting again, from him who was now become the theme of her young imagination's brightest dreams, whose tastes and opinions were assuming, unconsciously to herself, the entire direction of her occupations and pursuits, whose society had given a new impetus to her somewhat dull existence, enlivening her fancy, and refreshing her mind, by that congeniality which youth alone finds in youth—it was the first cup of real bitterness she had ever tasted, and on that account not the more easy to quaff.

She recollected how she had lately welcomed the morning light, which would restore her to his loved society ; and how far too early the shadows of evening had fallen for her, who could have wished the day livelong. Added to her sorrow was a slight feeling of self-reproach, at having, by her raillery, piqued him, as she much feared, into a decision to bid farewell earlier than he would have done, had she but permitted her heart to prompt its own language.

She saw that Lyndesay had mistaken her girlish enthusiasm for the character of Montrose for a warmer feeling, and perhaps she was not altogether displeased at the error, as it had caused him

to betray the nature of his own interest in her. Yet how to undeceive him, without compromising herself, and appearing to seek an explanation? Then she recalled to mind, for the first time during many days, her own impression respecting the fair unknown, whose name had risen so spontaneously to his lips on their first acquaintance; and she determined, should the opportunity offer, (which the near approach of his departure rendered an almost hopeless anticipation,) that she would at least satisfy herself on this point,—whether he loved elsewhere. Her own feelings and perplexities under this doubt, thus again brought into play, softened her considerably as to the jealousy displayed by her lover, which now, far from resenting, she trusted was a proof of attachment, and her heart smote her for having heedlessly given rise to a sentiment so difficult to vanquish.

More miserable than she had ever been in her life, poor Kate passed through the glass door before which she was standing, upon the terrace, and wandered out into the garden, to endeavour in the fresh breeze to cool her burning cheeks, and to gain composure to her throbbing nerves.



At that period nerves were not called nerves ; and, like many others luxuries, they seldom appeared under any appellation, but were specially reserved for occasions such as the present.

Kate, then, though she never dreamed that she was nervous, felt that her heart beat quicker, her cheek flushed, and the slightest rustle amongst the trees caused her a general tremor. She rambled onwards in the direction of the long westerly avenue. As she slightly turned, before entering it, towards the house, she observed the figure of a man hastily advancing down the opposite glade. Her first thought was that it might be Lyndesay, who, she hoped, had been impelled by similar feelings to her own, to seek relief in a solitary ramble ; the next moment, however, reminded her that he could not, since he left her, have had time to leave the house to the distance from which the man appeared to be returning.

Curiosity succeeded to interest, and she awaited the approach of the individual, whom she presently recognised as her page Pierre. On seeing her, he advanced with eager haste to the spot where she stood. Wonder kept her stationary, for she then recalled to mind, what more interest-

ing incidents had banished from her thoughts—that Pierre had during the last two days been absent from the mansion, and that her grandmother had commented with surprise and some displeasure, on his disappearing thus without permission or announcement.

She remembered, too, that Alice had strengthened the Lady Clare's suspicions of Pierre's misconduct, and had even presumed to advise her lady not to receive him again on his return. As for Kate herself, she was strongly inclined to overlook his offence. Suspicion is not natural to a youthful mind, and she felt her confidence in Pierre's fidelity unshaken by this seeming deficiency in duty. So when the page arrived breathless at the spot where she stood, and made her a low obeisance, regarding with an obvious expression of sorrow her still tearful and agitated face, she collected herself, and spoke cheerfully.

“ Ah, Pierre! I fear me thou wilt have to encounter the Lady Clare's severe displeasure for this truant adventure of thine. She hath already threatened thy dismissal; but thou shalt have an intercessor in me, and my grandmother's wrath seldom survives the occasion.”

The page listened to her with an anxiety which seemed not to be either increased or diminished by her words. Affected, however, by the kindness of her tone, he knelt down and touched her hand with his lips, then pointed with earnestness towards the house, and used a peculiar gesture as if entreating her to return to it.

“Nay, good Pierre!” she said, “I am on my way to enjoy the coolness of the avenue. When I return, I will fulfil my promise of interceding with the Lady Clare in thy behalf, and meantime, as she is engaged, do not appear before her.”

Still the page rose not from his knees, but taking hold of her dress, he employed every gesture and action to turn her from her purpose of proceeding. At length, wearied with attempting to overcome an opposition, which seemed to her capricious and ill-timed, and in no mood to examine further into his reasons, the young lady desisted from her purpose, and throwing herself into a garden chair which was near, sheltered by a canopy of clipped yews, she said, perhaps with some slight pique,—

“Now leave me, Pierre; I sought my plea-

sure in this lonely walk, and being denied the liberty of proceeding by some whim of thine, give me at least the privilege of reflecting here alone upon my—my misery.”

The last words were uttered in a lower tone, as but meant for herself, but they were not lost upon the acute ear of the page, whose faculty of hearing seemed, contrary to the general case, to be in no ways affected in common with that of speaking, unless, indeed, that the absence of one faculty had quickened all the rest.

He sighed as he left her, and the next moment Kate recalled her own words: “My misery!” she repeated; “I that have affectionate parents, kind friends, and all that so many consider objects of envy, how ungrateful am I to talk of misery! But what are all these things to me now? These advantages of which I have only just become sensible of the possession?—for I never before have had occasion to count my blessings, in order to reason myself into thankfulness. What deep thoughts does sorrow bring!” and she leaned her head down and wept bitterly.

Poor Kate! she had yet to learn how frequently still deeper sorrow restores that tranquil

surface which early sorrow so ruffles ! Those deep thoughts have their conflict within, and a stormy and painful conflict it is, but with strong minds the final result is generally an outward calm, unruffled as the peacefulness of childhood.

And, in truth, in this stage of the heart's schooling, much of the tranquillity of childhood frequently returns. For when the world's dazzling pageants have ceased to delude us into day-dreams, and when we believe, however fondly, that we have quaffed at least our bitterest draught of suffering, then simple pleasures and the ever fresh and unexplored wonders of Nature charm us once more, as they did in very early youth. We wait our appointed time, in calm enjoyment of His gifts, whose ways, both in creation and providence, we have found ourselves unable to comprehend, but from whose love we are content to await that happiness in futurity, we vainly dreamt of here !

But we have been led by our heroine's first attempt at moral philosophy much farther than we intended. Were it necessary that we should engage ourselves in reflection so long as she did, both our readers and ourselves would be heartily

tired. Luckily, however, we are not altogether bound to the society of Kate, (and may we ever be preserved from being so to that of any young lady in love!) but have also to follow the proceedings of Albert Lyndesay, who left her after the conversation detailed in our last chapter, with that bitter feeling which a haughty and reserved character, diffident of his own merits, naturally experienced under the slightest expression of irony, from one whose love he sought.

He hastened to the library, which he found unoccupied; and flinging himself into a chair, shall we confess that, as he covered his face with his hands, one bitter tear of disappointed and wounded feeling forced its way from his eyes. Immediately he brushed it away; and, hearing footsteps, composed himself to meet Howard, who entered, and, remarking his pale cheeks and saddened expression, kindly inquired if he felt any return of his late symptoms.

"None whatever, dear sir, I thank you—but I come to bid you farewell—I quit this place at sunset."

"So soon!" replied his friend. "I heard from

Alice not half an hour ago that you had delayed your departure until the morning."

"Alice must have played the eaves-dropper—for to her I mentioned the former time, and not without a motive. The truth is, that her repeated inquiries on this point have raised doubts in my mind, as to the expediency of giving her explicit information, since I cannot help thinking she is employed to obtain it, and that either your safety or my own must be in some way implicated, as a consequence of the arrangement. Her having sounded yourself, also, my dear sir, on the subject, confirms my suspicions."

"But why suspect the poor girl at all?" said Howard. "She loves talking—it is the privilege of her sex, and," added he, smiling, "it may be long, you know, before she sees another handsome young stranger to afford her so animating a theme."

Lyndesay's face hardly relaxed its serious expression, as he said,

"You have remarked, I know, Pierre's absence during the last few days: between him and Alice there is, as I have noted, an inveterate enmity.

Now I have proof of the page's fidelity from what passed in my chamber on the night of Ninon's visit. I will not repeat words, supposed not to be overheard by me, but the little I was able to gather from Ninon's incoherent language, determined me narrowly to watch Alice, and not to leave the house without hinting to you my suspicions—I trust they may prove ill-founded."

"Never fear but they will do so," replied the good clergyman. "You were delirious on that night, and might imagine more than really passed, and the old crone's report is dubious at best. Kate is much attached to her waiting-woman, and I believe, though coquettish and vain, Alice is a pious and good girl at heart. I thank you, however, for the warning. But, my dear Lyndesay, why leave us to-night? is it in order to steal a march upon your fair antagonist?"

"No," replied Lyndesay. "Alice's intentions, whatever they may be, had no influence on mine."

"Have you then received intelligence which has served to hasten your departure?"

"No," again replied our hero; then added—"that is, not exactly—but—but—I am obliged



to go. My reasons, Master Howard, you can never know, but judge me with your wonted indulgence—and now farewell—God grant it be not for ever!”

“Well, my dear young friend, you talk in riddles to-day; but since it must be so, my blessing go with you! and may His benison attend you, who can lead us both by a path that we know not, so that in this life we may renew that friendship we prize so highly!—or if not so, let us strive to meet where there shall be no more parting!”

Albert wrung the hand which was held out to him.

“My best friend!—so good, so wise, the blessings of the orphan attend you!” and he tore himself away, no less agitated than when he had entered the room, though with very different sensations.

His thoughts met with an immediate diversion; for on stepping into the corridor, he saw Alice rapidly retreating from the direction of the spot where he stood, towards the apartments occupied by the domestics. Of course he felt no doubt that she had been placed in a position to overhear all

that had passed between himself and Howard. Roused into curiosity, he determined to watch her, and almost immediately she passed through a side door, which, he was aware, led into the grounds. He accordingly stationed himself at the window of the old hall, and soon perceived the object of his observations, who had descended from the terrace, and was hastily pursuing the direction of the north-westerly avenue. Albert determined to follow, and discover whether her wanderings tended in any way to elucidate the mystery of her conduct.

Leaving the house by the glass door, he loitered at a distance sufficient to keep the abigail in view, and thus he observed her enter the wood, not by the open glade, but by a hardly perceptible by-path amongst the trees, beset with entangled briars and brushwood. He himself had arrived near the entrance of the avenue, and was pausing to consider whether it was fair to pursue her course directly, when he heard a sound which arrested his attention ; and, advancing a step or two, he came suddenly upon Kate, who, with her head bent low upon the arm of the rustic seat, was lost in deep and painful reverie. She heard

his step, and immediately started up, her face and neck suffused with blushes.

"Pardon me!" he stammered out, "I fear I have intruded."

She was silent, and he continued,—

"Since you gave me no permission to seek you again, believe me I should not have ventured to do so, had not accident thrown me in your way."

"I could hardly have expected such submission to my sovereign will and pleasure," returned the young lady, resuming her wonted manner; "but in this case, perhaps, you would have mistaken my royal intentions."

"Did you then—do you—wish to see me once more?" said Albert, advancing a step or two towards her.

"I wished—that is—I took it for granted you would have the courtesy to bid me farewell."

"I feared I had offended you," said Lyndesay.

"To confess the truth," returned the maiden, with a smile, that was half malicious, "I have been thinking something very similar with regard to you. Shall we forgive each other?"

"Forgive *you*!" he exclaimed, as with a eager movement he seized her hand. "Oh, believe me!

I am too happy, too honoured, that you should think my regard worth retaining! If I was presumptuous, pardon me, in consideration of my feeling what you never can feel,—for whenever *you* love you must meet with a return!”

She coloured deeply, and turned away her face; but she did not withdraw her hand; and the reconciliation was tacitly sealed.

They stood for a few moments in silence, which was broken by Kate, who was seized by a sudden and unaccountable anxiety to know whether the chestnuts, at the end of the avenue, were ripe.

They moved forward in that direction, in order to ascertain the fact. When they had advanced a few steps, Lyndesay turned towards his companion, and said,

“ May I ask you one question ?”

“ Certainly, Master Lyndesay—considering the many you have asked me in the course of our acquaintance, I am surprised you have the grace to wait for permission.”

“ Because,” said Albert, “ it refers to our conversation of this morning.”

“ I thought we had forgotten that, by mutual consent,” she answered.

“Forgive me if I cannot forget one part of it!” returned he. “You spoke of Montrose!” She coloured again, and Albert, watching the change of countenance, added precipitately, “You love him!”

Had Kate given utterance to the direct denial which rose to her lips, she would have spared both herself and her lover much future anxiety. But she suppressed the first impulse, and contented herself with answering, in a manner embarrassed by the consciousness of his motives in asking it—“Why do you say so?”

“Because you talked of him with regard, with admiration—ay more—with enthusiasm!”

“And are these all? regard—admiration—enthusiasm! Would *you* be satisfied with these? Ah! Lyndesay, if ever it should be your lot to seek the possession of a woman’s heart, rest your hopes on her *silence* when you are the theme, and if she be eloquent in your praise, despair. And now that I have satisfied your strange inquiry, I must return to the house.”

“But one second—only one. I would fain believe your words do not shut out all hope, but bear with me, at least, whilst I tell you that I love

you more than life, though I may not, dare not, ask a return. Might I but devote my whole existence to your happiness, I should ensure my own. But your nearest relative requires me to separate from you, ignorant of your very name, and bound by a promise to abstain from seeking traces of you hereafter—and this to secure your peace and safety. Judge, then, how unselfishly, how devotedly, I must love you, when I am prepared to make this sacrifice, at the cost of all my future hopes, for your sake!—when I consent to part from you without a question, without a promise; with but the remembrance that I have anchored the vessel of my happiness upon a shore which I may never reach again!—that, poor as I was before I knew you, I am bereft of the only treasure I then possessed, the hope of a brighter future. In pity for the hopeless hours in which I am to dwell on your image, say, then, one word of kindness before we part!”

The young girl had turned round with the intention of retiring before Albert had commenced speaking. She stood, trembling and motionless, as he proceeded, affected, and almost appalled by the earnestness of his manner. At

length her firmness gave way, and she leaned against a tree for support, the large tears rolling down her cheeks. The setting sun glanced on those bright drops, more precious than diamonds to him who stood by, watching the effect of his own words. Hope once more rose in his bosom, as he marked her emotion, and grasping her hand, he pressed it to his lips; and they walked forward in silence.

Meantime the sun had sunk below the horizon, and the twilight reminded the lovers that long time had elapsed with them in that lonely avenue. They were awakened from the deep reverie into which both of them had fallen, by approaching its termination. Then, with an evident attempt to shake off the feelings she had so lately betrayed, Kate spoke in a tone which she intended should be perfectly easy and natural,—

“Tell me, Lyndesay,” she said, “tell me now, have you ever said all these fine things before?”

## CHAPTER IX.

The Gordon then his bougill blew,  
And said, Awa,' awa' ;  
This house o' the Rodes is a' in flame,  
I hauld it time to ga'.

O then bespyed his ain dear lord,  
As he cam ovr the lee ;  
He sied his castle all in blaze  
So far as he could see.

Then sair, O sair his mind misgave,  
And all his heart was wae :  
Put on, put on, my wighty men,  
So fast as ye can gae.

Put on, put on, my wighty men,  
So fast as ye can drie ;  
For he that is hindmost of the thrang,  
Sall neir get guid o' me.

PERCY RELIQUES.

“GRACIOUS God !” exclaimed Lyndesay, whom the energetic barking and sudden spring of the spaniel had induced for an instant to turn round. He suddenly stopped as he spoke, and



Kate, turning also, perceived that the mansion she had so lately quitted, was in flames. The fire, in its first fury, was bursting from door and window, fed by the abundance of combustible material used in the construction of all houses of that date; and the beautiful tracery of the windows of the chapel, where the fire, it was afterwards understood, had commenced, stood out from the brilliant glare within, splendid in the darkness.

For a while it looked as if illuminated for some great ceremony, for the thick stone walls, unencumbered by wood work, resisted the violence of the flames; but soon the intense heat prevailed, and the stained and decorated windows burst into splinters, or were fused into the mass of ruin around. Presently the roof fell in with a tremendous crash, and, as part of the walls crumbled beneath it, that side of the interior was laid open, which communicated by a door with the picture gallery of the mansion; and at the same moment from this spot there burst renewed volleys of smoke and flame.

From the spot where stood our lovers, the blazing edifice showed sublime and beautiful, as

it formed the apparent termination to the long dark lines, now but just visible in the twilight, of the peaceful avenue which they had traversed.

They waited not, however, to make the observations we have been recording. Sensations very different from admiration overwhelmed poor Kate, as, horror-struck at the sight, she called to mind that her grandmother, whom she had left within doors, would probably be at this hour engaged in her cabinet, which was situated in a remote part of the house, and where she would in consequence be the last to become aware of her awful situation.

The young girl's first impulse was to spring forward in the direction of the house, calling upon Lyndesay to accompany her. "Let us save my grandmother! may be she yet is ignorant of her danger! Oh, Albert, fly to her!—lose no time; if already she has not perished! Nay, detain me not,—I *must* go!"

More collected, though equally struck with surprise and dismay, Lyndesay forcibly retained his hold on Kate; and, sensible that her presence on the scene of terror and ruin would only add to his own confusion, and disable him from serv-

ing others, he feigned a composure which he was far from feeling; and, leading her to a seat on the turf, he entreated her to remain there till he should return. "Calm yourself, my best beloved! and rest assured that, since we see none of the inmates of the house in this direction, they are all together, and have escaped to a place of safety; perhaps, even now, they are in search of us. Believe, at any rate, that with the help of God, if the Lady Clare need any efforts of mine, she shall be restored to you!"

So saying he stooped to steal one kiss of Kate's cold and colourless lips, and with an apprehension he dared not utter, he turned to leave her. At that moment something rushed rapidly down the avenue; and, as Lyndesay received no answer to the call with which he hailed it, he waited till the object arrived at the spot where they stood, and found that it was no other than his own poor horse, which had burst from the stable, and was galloping from the scene of devastation. Grieved at having lost time by this incident, he proceeded quickly along the path, and was already far advanced, when, to his horror, he

heard a piercing shriek, with a call upon his name, from that voice whose tones could never be mistaken by the fond ear of love. He hesitated not a moment as to what course he should pursue, and his returning steps were hastened by another scream, and a wild call for help from the defenceless girl, whom, in the all-engrossing fear of a greater danger, he had left alone and unprotected in that solitary spot.

What was his consternation as he approached at discovering that she was in the grasp of a man, whose figure was not discoverable in the darkness, but whose repeated attempts to soothe his captive were met by wild exclamations of terror and despair! Having struggled to free herself, until her strength was exhausted, she had given up the contest, and suffered him to drag, rather than lead, her, towards the outer gate of the park.

“Now, by’re lady, my pretty mistress, but you have no cause for fear,” said a voice, which Albert at once recognized as having heard before, though in that moment of extremity he was unable to recall where. As he approached, he, however, found that the speaker was not alone.

Another dark figure appeared, and on perceiving Albert, this one advanced to meet him.

Excited by the emergency into the exertion of an almost superhuman strength, Albert waited not to question or challenge, but sprang upon his adversary with a force that brought him to the earth. His fall, and the accompanying groan—for he was severely bruised by the blow, though not seriously injured—induced his companion, unaware of the cause, to turn round, with the exclamation, “Hey, what now, Laurence?”—Lyndesay, passing over the prostrate body of the first opponent, answered the querist by a violent and stunning blow, which compelled him to relinquish his hold on the young lady.

Unable to decide whether to rest on the scene of action, or to fly from it, were attended with the greater danger, Kate clung to her lover’s side, still calling for help, in the anguish of her fear. Albert was, however, compelled to shake her off, and to close in mortal combat with the formidable adversary, who had now drawn his sword upon him.

Luckily, our hero had also his weapon, and for some time neither side gained a material advantage, but, presently, the odds were turned

against Lyndesay; as Laurence, who had in some degree recovered, rose from the ground to assist his accomplice in overpowering the single arm of Albert. He aimed a blow from behind, which Kate perceiving, sprang forward, and hung upon the uplifted arm. The next moment she fell fainting to the earth, but the blow had been diverted. Meantime, the dog—who, seemingly conscious of the state of affairs, had fastened his teeth deep into the leg of the ruffian who had carried off his young mistress, and had thus, in some measure, obstructed his offensive operations—gave a wild bark of delight, and rushed towards a narrow path, which also led out into the woods. The quick ear of the spaniel had detected footsteps; and one of the two miscreants, accustomed to notice every indication of danger, immediately bent his ears for a moment to the ground.

“There are more than we can match,—fly,—Jacobs,” he murmured.

A desperate oath was the only reply from his companion, and the next instant they were making their escape.

Lyndesay made an effort to detain the fore-

most, but the man levelling his carbine, threatened to discharge it instantly at his head, if not freed. Our hero dashed it from his hold, as he was in the act of fulfilling his threat, and the contents were lodged in the leg of the villain himself, slightly grazing that of Lyndesay. In agony of pain, and howling forth a terrible curse, the man limped away, and left to his antagonist the task of endeavouring to restore poor Kate to consciousness.

Ignorant as to whether she had received any hurt in the struggle, he longed for a light; and when he had raised her from the ground, and felt her clay-cold hand, he shuddered at the frightful apprehension which overtook him. He called her by every name which tenderness could suggest, but sense and animation seemed extinct; and to return towards the house, now a mass of flaming ruins, was not to be thought of.

As he sat supporting her lifeless figure with one arm, and endeavouring with the other, by constant friction, to restore circulation, he was startled by the sudden reappearance of the dog, and, closely following him, in the same bye-path, echoed the hasty footsteps of a man, whom, by a

low inarticulate murmur which supplied the poor fellow's deficiency of voice, our hero recognized to be the page Pierre. He instantly called him by name, and the boy, in return, uttered a harsh and shrill whistle. It was evident that the signal was understood: for immediately, the sound of horses' feet was heard in approach; and along the path, already mentioned, advanced a troop of horsemen, who, in files of two, rapidly emerged from the wood, and ranged themselves around the pair, to whose protection the sagacity of the dog, and of Pierre, alike had guided their hitherto unavailing search.

As far as the obscurity would allow him to distinguish, our hero judged that the array consisted of well-ordered and fully armed troops.

A cavalier rode at the head of the file, and directed their motions. To him Lyndesay was about to address himself, when he was stopped by the abrupt question from the other,—

“How is this?—have the villains escaped? Speak, young sir, if you please! and explain how all has happened: and meantime resign that helpless girl to my care.”

As the soldier spoke in a tone which told but



too well a habit of receiving obedience, and a fixed determination to be obeyed, he advanced towards Kate, and was stooping to lift her from Albert's hold. But the latter, gently tightening his grasp, replied with firmness, though with an involuntary deference,—

"Once, to-night, sir stranger, I have fought in this young lady's cause, and have rescued her from the hands of ruffians. Your concern with her I know not; but though thankful for your timely arrival, I cannot resign this lady into your charge, unless sanctioned in doing so by her relatives: and sooner than quit my privilege of protecting her, I will let you take my heart's blood."

"By Heaven! an obstinate lad, but a brave one!" said the cavalier aside to one of his followers; then addressing Albert, he continued,—

"This poor child requires immediate caring for; a truce to words then, young gentleman! My concern with her, as you are pleased to express it, and the sanction I promise to you in resigning her to my charge—is—that of—her father!"

"Her father!" exclaimed Albert.

“Her father, young sir, this young lady’s father!” returned the cavalier; “and if my word requires confirmation, take it from Pierre, and in all haste. Alice, wench, come hither! and atone for thy faults in recovering thy young mistress—’tis but a swoon, I trust.”

The page and waiting-woman, both thus summoned, came forward; and in the ready obedience of both, and the obsequious and almost-cringing humility of Alice, our hero read the truth of the cavalier’s assertion. His surprise at seeing the abigail in this warlike train was increased by the remembrance of his former suspicions, and her unaccountable manner of leaving the house on that very afternoon. However, female aid was indispensable for Kate, and as no other was near, to the care of her maid Lyndesay committed her; after receiving from Pierre, according to his well-known language of tokens, a solemn asseveration of the truth of the facts asserted.

Soon the senseless form of the maiden was placed upon a litter procured by the attendants; and the commanding officer, whispering some words into the ear of the page, directed the

men to carry the litter where Pierre should conduct them, and there await his own presence.

Lyndesay requested permission to accompany the party, and witness the recovery of the young lady, whose lengthened insensibility greatly alarmed him; but he found himself compelled, in spite of himself, to bow to the decision of the master spirit, which, in the character of father, chief, or master, seemed to rule all around.

“Rest here, young gentleman, if you please! my daughter shall be well attended to. With yourself I have a few words to exchange as yet—but wait. Captain Rokeby, lead six of the men towards the ruins; see if any living creature still linger there, and rescue whatever property you may. Which way fled your antagonist, young master?”

Our hero pointed to a path leading southwards, nearly in the direction of the mansion.

“Then you, Scroope and Burgoyne, divide the remainder into parties—scour the woods in every direction—and spare no pains to secure the villains. May be you will encounter some of the fugitives from this unhappy dwelling; if so, inform them that their lady is safe, as well as my daugh-

ter; and bid them hie to the next village, where I will presently provide for them. The most painful task remains behind: Howard has not been heard of; he conducted the Lady Clare to a place of safety; but his devoted benevolence prompted him to return himself to the spot, and join in every measure for affording relief and rescue to the rest: the business of seeking him, living or dead, alas! I will delegate to none. How say you? has my daughter revived?" continued the speaker, as one of the attendants returned.

"My young lady has been brought back to consciousness, please you, my lord; but is marvellously feeble and weak; and hath sent to make inquiry whether the gentleman was wounded, who saved her—when she fainted, he was struggling alone against the strength of two."

"Go—tell her all is well, and the gentleman uninjured. Is it not so, my friend?" continued the officer, addressing Albert; "truly, I have been rather tardy in making the inquiry, as well as in expressing my gratitude for the service you have this night rendered me and mine."

“My lord, I require no thanks,” returned our hero; “and the happiness of saving the lady Kate were in itself sufficient reward, had I met with severer wounds. The few I have sustained are trivial.”

“You are then hurt?”

“My arm is slightly wounded; and I have a sword cut in the shoulder; besides the mark of that villain’s bullet in the leg. Nothing, however, which need prevent me from accompanying you in your humane errand of seeking the excellent Howard.”

“Now listen to me, Master Lyndesay, for that, I am aware, is your name. You must *not* accompany me in this search. On the contrary, you must, if possible, execute your previous resolution of proceeding towards York to-night. Owing, as I do, my daughter’s safety to you, I grieve to appear discourteous; but you must not meet her again: and an honourable man like yourself, needs not to be reminded, that he is pledged to a vow of secrecy respecting all that concerns his dwelling at this place. I do not pretend to conceal from you that I hold an office in which all sense of

private injury or interest must be merged in the public good; and had not the irrepressible anxiety of a father brought me here to-night, this outrage on my property should have passed unheeded, as it still must go unpunished. None must know that I have been present on the spot. The miscreants will escape, but I dispersed my troop in order to obtain a few minutes' private conversation with you. To the point then, Master Lyndesay: I know your views in life, and the hopes you found upon the favour of the King. Should you meet, as is likely, with difficulty in gaining access to his presence, shew this ring, which I beg you to accept as a testimony of a father's gratitude; it will procure you, at least, the deference of the officials; nay, no thanks—if due at all, I stand the debtor. Again—should you find your sanguine expectations baffled, remember, that an old courtier warned you, to 'put not your trust in princes.' ”

“ And Howard ! ” exclaimed Lyndesay, “ how shall I know whether that valuable life is spared ? ”

The nobleman, for such he evidently was,

mused a moment, then said, "Your anxiety does you honour, and shall be gratified. Mark me. When you reach York, enter the cathedral and pass into the choir. Behind the high altar, and on the right side of our lady's chapel, there stands a mutilated tomb, soon to be removed to make way for fresh remains. In a cavity of this tomb, if our friend lives, you shall find a letter in his handwriting. And now—farewell—neglect not the wounds you have received, though they be slight. I may not linger, for before to-morrow's dawn I must be in York. Farewell."

Albert uttered a respectful adieu; for the individual before him—at first veiled by the darkness of the night; and, when at length torches were brought, still completely shrouded by the form of his helmet from that scrutiny of the features by which we ever take our first impress of character,—yet had won from his hearer that involuntary homage, which high breeding, inflexible self-possession, and a certain tone peculiar to those accustomed to handle only matters of magnitude and importance, never fails to elicit. Our hero's unquestioning submission to the arbitrary incognito, still

imposed (and, as it appeared to Lyndesay, imposed rather with a view to prevent his own recognition of the young lady, than from any other apprehension) was a proof of this power.

The instant he had finished speaking, the nobleman turned his horse's head towards the ruins, and Albert was left alone.



## CHAPTER X.

Compound for sins they are inclined to,  
By damning those they have no mind to.

BUTLER.

WE must now beg the reader to accompany us in a slight retrospect of the proceedings of an individual, who, though innocent of any intentional share in this night's proceedings, had, nevertheless, by her folly, become a tool in the hands of those by whom the mischief had been planned and brought about.

It will be remembered that, on the evening which closed so inauspiciously, Alice had left the house before sunset, and taken a path through the wood towards the outskirts of the domain: and that our hero's suspicions, excited by her eaves-dropping propensities, were but little lulled by the apparent direction of her wanderings: and

certainly, nothing could plead his excuse in the eyes of our readers, nor we are sure in his own, for failing to ascertain the truth of his conjectures; save the unexpected meeting which he at that moment encountered with his lady love; and which, we feel confident our fair readers will allow, was sufficient to drive all other thoughts from his mind. "For when a lady's," &c.—but we forbear repeating an adage so new and original, and therefore proceed, in place of Albert Lyndesay, to follow the steps of the fair abigail.

Avoiding any known path, she proceeded through the wood, which extended in that direction over nearly two miles of country. As the forest deepened, the unequal and even precipitous ground rendered the mazes through which she passed more intricate. Arriving at the foot of some rude steps cut in the side of a quarry, and leading to its summit, she uttered a low call; and immediately a man appeared from a cavity in the rock, where he had evidently been awaiting her arrival.

"A good morrow to ye, Mistress Alice," said he, "but ye've kept me a pretty spell here!

Didn't yourself fix the hour, and d'ye call it manners to keep it this gate?"

"I had my reasons, Mr. Eilsie, depend upon it," tartly replied the girl; "and if your eyes are tired of watching for me here, I left less weary ones behind me. So if I be tardy, blame not me, but the young gentleman, our guest."

"Eh! sits the wind in that quarter," rejoined the man. "And so his gentility hath played the serpent, and whispered soft things in thine ear, and thou, like a true daughter of Eve, hast tarried to listen to them?"

"Call him as ye list," returned the maiden, not displeased at the insinuation, "but if he hath the wisdom of the serpent, he hath also, I wager me, the boldness of the lion!"

"And the strength, doubtless. So, sweetheart, play me the Delilah, and tell me when this Sampson purposes to leave the mansion."

"Now, why do ye ask me that, Laurence? for no good purpose, I'll warrant. If the lad *is* well favoured and gallant, and if he *did* watch my steps, sure there's no blame in that; besides, how knowest thou it was for love?"

Now, no one could be endowed with a more positive certainty that Lyndesay's sentiments were precisely the reverse of those she chose to insinuate, than Alice herself. But vanity, and a certain degree of resentment against Laurence for his first impatient expressions, prompted the game she was playing for his vexation.

"Nay then, poor weak maiden!" replied her piqued admirer, "nay then, vain maiden! since a comely face and a few light words may gain thee over to the idolators, surely thou art unworthy to associate with the congregation of the faithful. Even now, while thy zeal hath been so slack to join the Lord's people, they are panting and yearning for the word; which I, with a carnal feeling which I repent me to have indulged, besought that chosen vessel, the Reverend Shimei Haman, to withhold until thy coming. So, mark me, Mistress Alice, if thou wouldest join our sweet fellowship, thou must keep no terms with malignants or incendiaries; further than to learn their views for the furtherance of righteous ends. Beware, damsel! lest, looking back upon these cities of destruction thou incur

the fate of her who was changed into a pillar of salt!"

This rebuke and strange threat, pronounced with a severity which was somewhat heightened by a shade of jealousy on the part of Laurence, that Alice should have eyes for any other attractions than his own, seemed to produce on her an effect hardly to be expected in one of her flippant and usually self-complacent spirit. The truth was, that her inordinate disposition for coquetry had been taken advantage of by this man, who, as we have seen, was a subordinate agent in the promotion of the general disturbance for which the country was now rife; as well as a zealous actor in the grand puritanical farce with which the public were shortly afterwards regaled; so well adapted as it was to the genius of low and uneducated minds, both in its performance and reception.

Under his patron, the Rev. Shimei Haman, Laurence had attained sufficient proficiency in the arts of ejaculating, expounding, and dreaming, to be able successfully to officiate in the absence of that worthy, whose exertions were by no means

limited to any given district. Through the pre-eminence to which these "gifts" had raised him, Laurence had been enabled to obtain a powerful ascendancy over the mind of the pretty serving-woman, whom accident and her love of gossip had, in the first instance, thrown in his way: and from her he had acquired much information concerning the family and party amongst whom she dwelt, which he in turn rewarded by the importance he appeared to attach to her conversion.

Although guiltless of a deliberate intention to betray her employers, and ignorant of the full extent of the designs of her present associates; Alice's vanity greedily drank in the hints which represented herself as elevated, by a special calling, above the carnal minded and unregenerate among whom she resided; and of whose perilous state, both in body and soul, she heard with ever increasing awe. Obedient, therefore, she was to every mysterious intimation of the fanatics, though occasionally, as in the instance before us, nature resumed her sway. Had she been aware of Haman's previous position in her master's family, her unbounded respect for the "powerful" minister might have been a little diminished, but this

her own inexperience, and the artifice of her companions, carefully concealed from her; and since his arrival in the district, the reverend personage and his coadjutor had found a useful auxiliary to their designs in the person of Alice.

She had, however, suspected the hand from whence proceeded the disaster which had befallen our hero, and in real compassion for his youth and good looks, was reluctant to expose him to further perils. The threat which concluded her lover's expostulations, however, took its effect upon a mind both weak and cowardly, and without further reserve, she proceeded to acquaint him with Albert's intended departure at sunset; and to make him a party to all the information of which she had, fairly or unfairly, become mistress; taking full credit to herself for her zealous exertions to obtain it.

In return, she received an assurance that no violence was intended our hero, since all purposes of attacking him had been answered already; and this subject being satisfactorily dismissed, the maiden, after listening to a few sugared phrases, more interesting to her than to our readers, followed her admirer up the steps which ascended

the quarry side; and presently entered with him into a kind of gallery or tunnel, formed in the rock by the course of a stream; but greatly enlarged by the hand of art; so that, by stooping a little, a man could enter it. In this gallery, originally worked to establish a communication between opposite quarries, the bed of the stream was now dry; and Alice, to whom the path was not new, followed her conductor through the passage, which, as they proceeded, became dark as night.

At length he struck a light; and, a stranger might have supposed, not before it was necessary to their safety; since the apparent termination of this gloomy path was a pool of dark water, stagnant and putrid, and offering but little inducement to any of the senses to proceed in exploring the cave from mere curiosity.

As they had been hitherto on the descent as they proceeded, they were now deep in the bosom of the hill: when suddenly the daylight burst upon them; and, a large flag-stone above their heads being raised, on an appointed signal, they ascended by a few steps into a spacious chamber excavated in the rock. This was lighted by broad



apertures on the side of the hill, also worked into a deep quarry, opposite to the point by which they had entered it.

Their arrival appeared to occasion no surprise; and hardly was an eye turned towards them all being intently fixed upon the Rev. Shimei Haman, who, tired, we suppose, of awaiting the advent of his able colleague and their fair convert, had commenced what he termed the outpouring of the Spirit; and was at the moment engaged in relating his vision of the preceding night.

There might be about thirty persons assembled, all of the lowest class; and for the most part bearing that dogged and discontented look which ignorance and fanaticism combined rarely fail to impress upon the countenance. Here and there might be seen an honest face, serious and sorely puzzled; while some were weeping, some groaning, some on their knees, and others reclining at length on the ground; in high satisfaction at that emancipation from the idolatrous formality of an established worship, which left to every man liberty to exhibit at discretion his own idea of deep and self-denying devotion.

There were no benches in this rude area; and

what few seats were there consisted of blocks of the quarry stone; the Rev. Shimei Haman feeling considerable sympathy with the sufferings of the martyrs, when representing himself and his flock as driven to take refuge in the dens and caves of the mountains, and deprived of the most ordinary accommodations of civilized life.

The minister himself, clad in a suit of liver-coloured fustian, fitting tightly to his person, his hair closely cropped, his thin and pinched figure stretched to its full height, was standing upon a mass of granite, which formed a dais at the end of the room. One long and attenuated arm was stretched upwards with its bony forefinger pointing to the skies, whither also his eyes were directed, the other placed upon his breast.

Directly in face of him sat a woman, old and haggard-looking, her head resting upon her hands, which were fixed immovably upon her knees. She kept her dark eyes steadfastly fixed upon the preacher; and testified to the deep impression both his manner and matter wrought in her, by repeated groans and sighs, with ejaculations such as "The Lord have mercy upon us!"—"The Lord prepare me!"—"Curse ye, Meroz! said

the angel of the Lord," &c., varied skilfully according to the subject handled by the minister.

To this last we must now turn our attention, though anxious to dwell as little on the discourse of this great northern light as is consistent with our wish of doing justice to all parties; since the unhallowed use of all which our native tongue affords of holy and devotional language, and above all, of the sacred words of Scripture, offers, even in the repetition, a shock to our best feelings.

To resume the thread of our narrative, and to afford a specimen of our friend Shimei's powers, we must, according to our plan of doing justice, give his own words. The first which greeted the ear of Alice were—

“And about midnight, as I was pouring out my heart to the Lord, and humbly praying for the accomplishment of God's work, I heard a voice which said, ‘Doubt not, I will do it’—and my temptations were strong—yea, I was sore vexed in the spirit, and I lay groaning and wrestling with the Evil One; and I besought the Lord for a respite, and the voice uttered these words, ‘Arise, and be doing.’ And long I medi-

tated upon these revelations, and at dawn I looked into the book of the Scriptures, and my eye fell upon the words, ‘Ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.’ And again I said to the Lord, ‘How shall we do this?’ And I opened again, and I saw, as in a dream, ‘And Joshua *burnt* Ai, and made it a heap for ever—even a desolation unto this day.’” . . . . .

More we may be excused from repeating. Suffice it to say, that the Rev. Shimei Haman found his audience so wrought upon by his eloquence, that his inspiration seemed to increase every moment for three long hours. During this time the daylight declined, and the place in which they were assembled, at all times obscure, became quite dark; so that by the ear alone was it discoverable that one or more of the congregation quitted the apartment.

As the darkness deepened, and whispers occasionally were interchanged amongst the throng; of which some were in language not the most delicate, nor fit for woman’s ear, Alice became sensible of the imprudence of the step she had taken, in placing herself, at such an hour and in

such a place, in the power of these rude and lawless men; of whom she knew nothing but that one of their number professed an admiration of her person, and a concern for her soul. She called him by his name in a suppressed tone, that she might assure herself her protector was near, but no answer was returned: and when she repeated her appeal, the minister, with a voice which seemed to gather thunder in its wrath, turned towards the side on which she sate his reproof and denunciation:

“Vain babblers! hath Satan then loosed your tongues that ye cannot hold your peace, but must be seeking carnal things, when ye should be not only in part, but altogether in Paradise. ‘Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.’ I tell you, hypocrites, ye revile your Lord! ye spit upon him! ye crown him with thorns! ye scourge him! ye——”

How long this tirade might have continued, or the trembling Alice have sustained it without fainting, remains uncertain; for at this moment both speaker and audience were surprised by the sudden entrance of an individual, who had never been seen in that place before.

This was no other than the minister's daughter, Lillas Haman, a comely and bright-eyed maiden of sixteen, with a small, well rounded figure, and a dress so arranged as to shew it to the best advantage. She possessed much of the *tournure* of a French soubrette, and her usual demeanour was lively and animated in the extreme. About her mouth there lurked that compressed smile so indicative of mischief; while the same expression in her eyes was somewhat softened by the lashes, which overshadowed the glowing cheeks. The latter were too ruddy to suit the taste of many connoisseurs in female beauty; and corresponded but little with her name, which her father, as if to heighten the contrast, always abbreviated to Lily.

In truth she was his pride; and he preferred her to everything else, money excepted. She, however, possessed great influence with him; which may be inferred from her daring to absent herself from his fanatical displays of oratory, at which prayers, promises, and threats, had alike failed to induce her attendance.

When, therefore, she appeared on this night with a lantern in her hand, which served to show

that her face was paler than usual, even the Rev. Shimei Haman himself, was at first thrown off his guard.

“Why, Lily! what now? Sooner should I have looked to see the cock from off the church steeple! But,” added he, in an altered tone, “may be the Spirit moveth the maiden to come and join herself to the congregation of the faithful.”

A scarcely audible “Humph,” uttered by the little damsel was all the answer this devout invocation received; and without further preface, she addressed her father,—

“Know ye that the house is burning? the great house hard by? For heaven’s sake, father, hasten to give aid!—and good people, all of you—who have a mind to succour the best and truest hearts living, tarry not a moment. Ye may bear ladders or carry water, and not one too many. Soon all will be in ashes!”

“And pray who brought thee this gossip, Lily?” returned the Rev. Shimei, his countenance not relaxing a muscle of its wonted frigidity; “I wager me its an idle invention of that loon, Walter Craven; and on a piece, verily, with all

the other lies and flatteries with which he fills thine ears, girl! Thou art a silly wench to hold such a knave in dalliance."

"Now shame upon you! though ye be my father," said the highly irritated damsel; "that ye stand there, taking away the good name of one that's as honest and true as any man here, and may be more so, while ye know that these helpless ladies that we have both served,—ay, *served*—I care not to say it, my father! though some who even now are eating of their bread betray them," and she glanced at Alice. "I say these ladies were our benefactresses: and, as is most likely, will lose life or substance for want of assistance that we could render: and here ye keep all the neighbours close shut up from giving help, and make believe not to credit the fact yourself!"

"Gently, gently, my bonnie maiden," returned the meek spirited Shimei; "seest thou not that the pious Laurence hath left our flock? and is probably lending a hand at the fire; if there be one anywhere else than in thy own bright eyes. I perceive too that our good mother in Israel, Ninon, hath departed—yea, and others also."

"As for Laurence Eilsie, I can tell you, father!



he was more likely to light the fire than to quench it; for but an hour since, I saw him in company with that ill-looking Popish priest that brought the handsome and noble young lady to our house; and that gave me such ill words, because I chose to serve the young lady's wishes, as was my duty towards one of her quality."

The truth was, that the Dominican, in escorting Marguerite d'Amville towards London, had stolen an interview with his accomplice and comrade, Shimei Haman; (then recently arrived in Yorkshire from a sojourn among the fanatics of the north) in order to concert with him measures, the sequel of which the course of our narrative has already developed. Female sympathy had, during their conference, attracted Lilius towards his fair charge who, she had the penetration to discover, was under considerable restraint, as well as depression. In order to beguile her from this sadness, so ill becoming in the eyes of the minister's daughter, a lady so beautiful and evidently so rich, Lilius bestowed upon the young lady all the small confidence it was in her power to make. She related the history of her own life and her father's; together with divers hints concerning

the present state of affairs between herself and Walter: and last, not least, disclosed to her the important secret, which she had had her own means of acquiring, of the near vicinity of the Lady Clare and her granddaughter. At the names of the latter the hitherto somewhat wavering attention of Margaret was roused; for she had long been bound to those ladies by the ties of tender friendship; and her desire would have been at once to seek them openly; but something from within told her that this course would not be conceded by the stern confessor who held dominion over her movements. This idea was confirmed by the minister's daughter, who laughed wildly at such a scheme; but undertook, if the affair were left to her management, to bring about a meeting, before her father and the Dominican should terminate their conference.


We have said that the independent little maiden had her own means of both ascertaining and communicating facts which her father concealed from her: and in this case she succeeded so well, that, ere an hour had elapsed, the parties had met, and interchanged the greetings of old established intimacy.

In accordance with the prohibition made by the noble owner of the mansion, against the reception of any guest, as well as to avoid observation, the spot which had been selected for the rendezvous was without the precincts of the grounds; though sheltered from observation by the woods which skirted the domain. One incident alone disturbed the privacy of the meeting: this was the addition of Montrose to the party.

He had persevered in his resolution of hovering in the neighbourhood of Margaret until he should see her placed under stronger protection; and accordingly had traced her to the abode of Haman. Ardently desiring to address a few words to her, yet sensible that the surveillance of the priest was so rigid as to render all hope of meeting her alone vain, the earl had seriously deliberated on the expediency of openly challenging the Dominican to resign to him the protection of Marguerite d'Amville. But, besides that this scheme partook too much of the nature of knight errantry, the earl felt that he could assign no good reason, save his own undoubted impressions, for withdrawing the young lady from the hands to which her guardian and nearest relative had con-

signed her. He was therefore much relieved when, on the evening in question, he found himself accosted by the same sybil who had on a previous occasion shown herself so cognisant of Margaret's movements; and who directed him to proceed immediately to the spot indicated for the meeting. It was this occurrence (which brought him in contact accidentally with the ladies of the mansion) to which Kate referred, when in the conversation with our hero which awakened his jealous suspicions, she spoke of having recently met the earl; the above interview having taken place during Lyndesay's confinement to his chamber.

The precautions of Lilius, however, had proved ineffectual, in securing the temporary absence of Margaret from the jealous eye of the Dominican; who, though far from suspecting the whole truth, connected her proceedings in some way with those of the Earl of Montrose, whose influence over her heart he proposed to annihilate, and from whose society he consequently decided utterly to separate her. Since he had not as yet, however, established on his own part the unbounded tyranny of conscience which it was his



purpose to substitute for the brighter and more genial influence, he dared not to pour upon the young lady herself the full tide of passion which the step she had taken had aroused within him : and on poor Liliás, without whose assistance he was aware nothing could have been undertaken, it accordingly fell. Perhaps none could have better weathered the storm than the imperturbable little maiden in question : and the derision with which she met the threats of Jacopo amazed and almost terrified her father ; who was held by the priest in that fear, which a wicked strong mind ever exerts over a wicked weak one.

Having explained this incident sufficiently for the present course of our narrative, we must return to the dialogue between the father and daughter.

“ Hush !—hush ! simpleton !” exclaimed the minister, in answer to his daughter’s last remark : “ what knowest thou of popish priests or of high-born ladies ? Alack ! the very land stinketh with the savour of their abominations !”

“ More of both I know, may be, than ye think !” returned the daughter ; “ but now to the

point, my father. Will ye, or will ye not, lend aid to our lady and my dear young mistress? for if not, whatever may befall, I go alone."

And as she said this, the maiden stamped her little foot with the air of one resolved to effect the assurance that opposition was of no avail.

"Stay!" exclaimed Alice. "I—I think I had better accompany you; but, heavens! we are undone!"

While she was speaking, a helmeted head appeared at the broad fissure in the rock by which Lilius had entered; and, indeed, by which all passed who were not aware of the secret cavern leading to the other side of the hill. Another and another followed: till a company of about a score of armed men had taken their station—all of them in the buff coat and steel cuirass which formed the distinctive uniform of the royal troops; and wearing head-pieces with cheeks, which in a great measure concealed the features, and prevented the identifying of the wearer.

This formidable band, whom the fears of some, and the stricken consciences of others, magnified into an army, remained for some time motionless;

apparently watching the effect of their own entrance upon the trembling groups around them.

At length their leader turning to some one in the back ground, observed—

“Here is no sign of sedition: these men are unarmed—they can hardly be met for mischief.” The person addressed made no reply; and the speaker, turning towards the minister, seemed to startle him by his next tones.

“Your name, sir?—purpose and object in assembling here a concourse of persons in darkness and concealment? I demand these several particulars, in the King’s name!”

Lilias, who was the only individual in the apartment who had remained perfectly undismayed, and who had coolly beheld the array, and listened to the voice, now came forward; and, addressing the leader of the troop with an assumed air of simplicity, which, however, sate quite naturally upon her, she said,—

“Surely, master, such a great and good gentleman as your honour seems to be, would not think of disturbing a few Christians, met together to relate their experience, and to watch and pray!

—whilst yonder there the big house is turned into a flaming fiery furnace, lighted by Satan himself, for aught I know ; and to be sure your honour and these brave gentlemen might find fitter employment in saving the poor ladies that live there, from the power of the Evil One !”

Then, suddenly approaching to the side of the officer, who had exclaimed at her information, she added, in an under tone,—“ My father does not recognise you, my lord, but woman’s wit is not so easily beguiled—hasten to your house, and save your daughter—if yet there be time !”

At this moment, the officer’s sleeve was pulled from behind ; and the sharp eyes of Liliás detected the person of Pierre, who seemed in his silent language to communicate something to his master ; for the latter ejaculated, “ Thank Heaven !” Turning to Liliás, he muttered,—

“ She is safe,—she left the house some hours since,—call her baggage of a waiting-woman, and bid her follow me !”

Then, raising his voice, he continued, addressing Shimei,—“ This damsel, thy daughter, hath interceded for thee and these misguided people, —you will therefore remain here, under a guard,



until my return, and should I find no proof of your being implicated in this night's proceedings, you will then be released."

Without waiting for reply, the officer turned away; and, hastily appointing a part of his company to guard the egress from the rocky chamber, he departed with the rest of the troop, followed by Alice, who, crest-fallen and silent, had placed herself by the side of Pierre. The minister's daughter hastened to avail herself of the same opportunity of quitting the stricken and amazed congregation.

## CHAPTER XI.

For we must fall, both we and ours,  
This mansion and these pleasant bowers—  
Walks, posts, and arbours, homestead, hall—  
Our fate is theirs—will reach them all :  
The young horse must forsake his manger,  
And learn to glory in a stranger ;  
The hawk forget his perch : the hound  
Be parted from his ancient ground :  
The blast will sweep us all away—  
One desolation—one decay !—WORDSWORTH.

IN order to afford some elucidation of the events of the two last chapters, we must make our reader aware of various particulars, without which the series of circumstances therein related, might offend his notions of the probable and natural. The setting on fire of a house, and the forcible abduction of a young lady, are events which can hardly startle even the most incredulous ; as every body who knows the world,

(and in these days, thanks to steam, every body does know the world!), is well accustomed to the incendiary taste of our countrymen; slightly varying in direction, perhaps, with the age. But the circumstance which is less common, is the very opportune appearance of the lady's father with an armed band, at the very moment when he was wanted; and when all chance of escape for his daughter had otherwise been impossible.

We must first tell the reader, then, (for we like to trace events to their source,) that from the commencement of the Rev. Shimei Haman's ministry in that part of the county of York where he had fixed his temporary abode, the suspicions of one of the most constant and most accredited of his congregation had been aroused. This was the old woman Ninon, in whose powers of divination and second sight he partly believed, and whose pretensions he partly maintained, in order to confirm the belief of others—so useful to his own designs.

She had followed him from North Britain, whence she was on her journey when our hero met her on the borders,—to gather, as she said, the grains of the pure word which ever dropped in the path

trodden by the "powerful minister;" and had conjectured, from the first, that the "sojourn," (to use his own term,) of Shimei Haman in that part of the country had some connection with the neighbourhood of the old mansion, and its inmates. She had carefully concealed her knowledge of the existence of such a spot: and, finding that, as the minister's congregation increased, his style became more inflammatory, and that his language clearly indicated some approaching outrage, she secretly communicated her suspicions to an individual whose relations with her were little suspected by any party; and whose post might render them in some degree available, for the safety of those whom Ninon believed to be the parties threatened. This was the page, Pierre, who on the night of her visit to Albert's chamber made her acquainted with the good understanding which subsisted between Alice and Lawrence Eilsie. In consequence, it was arranged between the dwarf and his strange ally, that Pierre should, without alarming the household, proceed at once to York; and lay before his patron the state of affairs, leaving it to his own judgment to decide

whether they afforded ground for further precaution. He had just returned to the mansion from thence, when noticed by Kate, and repulsed by her for attempting to induce her re-entrance into the house: an attempt, which, had he known the nature of the threatened danger, was of course the very last he would have essayed. But only vague and mysterious indications of violence in the leaders of the party had been observed by Ninon; and she had fixed on that identical evening as the probable commencement of their measures, in the first instance only from its being the time fixed for the departure of Albert Lyndesay—whose courage and strength, though overpowered when opposed by treachery, and weakened by exhaustion, had, she found, yet left an impression on Laurence, which by no means induced a wish for a second hostile meeting. As the scheme, whatever it was, remained a secret, confined to the keeping of the gifted minister himself and his associate Laurence, Ninon had no means of ascertaining, in a direct way, aught which could enable her to avert it. She therefore betook herself to her

prophetic character—and hit upon the expedient of sounding their views by predicting the very circumstances she hoped to contravene.

“There shall be an outpouring of wrath!” she exclaimed, suddenly, in the congregation; “yea, a fearful outpouring!—so that every heart shall quake, and every eye shall grow dim!—and before the fourth sun shall set from hence the vial shall be poured forth upon the ungodly.”

Since the most gifted and educated of the period were hardly free from superstitious belief, it is no matter of surprise that the two confederates, whose ignorance gave to such impressions unlimited power, were struck dumb by the evidence which the sybil’s words afforded, that a supernatural agency had directed the accomplishment of their plot to this very night. Still, though Ninon noted this, she discovered, from hints which from that time were more freely dropt in her presence, that they awaited the arrival of a third party. When, therefore, on the fourth night from this, she saw the Rev. Shimei enter the cave accompanied by the Dominican, no longer, however, habited as such; and shortly afterwards beheld the entrance, on the

opposite side, of Alice, under the guidance of Laurence, thus leaving Kate deprived of her usual companion and attendant—Ninon waited but until the darkness should render her exit unobserved, to quit the chamber, and seek Pierre, who, anxious and doubtful, had been in quest of herself. From him she learned that his patron, on receiving his intelligence, had ordered a small company of the royal horse to take their station at the nearest habitable village, about two miles distant; on pretence of intercepting messengers who were known to be passing between the disaffected subjects in the south, and the Scottish army in Northumberland. To this station she immediately despatched the page, and herself (to avoid all appearance of collusion with the loyal party, which might have interfered with her operations for the future), retired to the dwelling she usually occupied, a cave or nook hewed out of the side of a precipitous rock near its summit, by some former labourer of the quarry, and which, from its elevation, commanded a view of the country for miles around. The low entrance was hid in tangled bushes and fern; and overhung by the wild and knotted boughs of the

fir trees which took root on every narrow shelf of the precipice.

Not even the leaders of the covenanting congregation knew of her abode: a precaution she had taken partly to maintain the mystery of her character, and partly that she might ever have in readiness a covert place of refuge, for herself or others, in case of need. She appeared amongst them—and vanished—at pleasure; and the awe attached to her language and character was such that none ventured to question or inquire too nearly in aught that concerned her. From all intrusion into her rough homestead she was safe—as the rugged rock on which her habitation hung had formed the grave of its last occupant; a huge mass having fallen on him while labouring the quarry, and buried him under its weight at the base of the rock. From that time the place was considered unlucky, and other quarries, less dangerous, were worked. The “Dead man’s kist,”—as the square bleached mass of rock which covered his remains soon began to be termed,—was the sole occupant of that vast cemetery: none came to intrude upon its solitude; for the population of that district, extremely scanty, and scattered at



wide intervals over a large expanse of country, were thoroughly imbued with the belief in the supernatural, of which they are not, even now, divested. Here then did Ninon fix her abode ; as an eagle in her eyrie, secure and unmolested ; no eye, save Pierre's, having as yet viewed the interior of her domicile.

On the evening in question, however, she seemed to imagine the possibility of other visitors ; for she piled the faggots on her rude stone hearth ; and having in a vessel of earthenware drawn some water from a neighbouring spring, she placed it near the embers, to imbibe warmth ; then taking a truss of dried fern, she hastily swept the dust from off the few moveables her dwelling afforded ; and sprinkling a little of the white sand, with which the place abounded, over the floor, she looked about her with the air of one who has been engaged in a vast scene of preparation ; and is imagining the impression likely to be produced by the result of her labours upon those who are expected to arrive.

Apparently quite satisfied with the aspect of her domicile, she turned towards a fissure in the rock which by day served as the window of the

dwelling, and which gave her a view of the surrounding landscape. Long she stood, unable to distinguish aught save the waving of the trees in the valley beneath her, not yet quite hidden in the darkness; and insensible to any sound but the distant bells of the herding cattle; when suddenly, in the direction of the mansion, there arose, as at a burst, a volume of flame—so bright—so strong—and clear—that without the aid of gunpowder such a flash could hardly have been kindled.

The ejaculation “*Mon Dieu!*” which burst freely from the lips of the sybil, was followed by the somewhat anomalous, though suppressed murmur: “*Mais! ces diables! que faire?*” She stood irresolute; and more than once advanced to the opening of the cave, as if determined to venture forth and offer aid in person. Yet she returned again, apparently convinced that her chances of usefulness were greater in remaining stationary. Unable, however, to moderate her excitement, she prostrated herself in front of the small altar, which, even in this rude place, her devotion had formed of a projection of the rock; adorned by divers relics, and surmounted by a small ebony crucifix, all ranged against the rude

stone. For some time the old woman gave way to a series of passionate ejaculations and invocations; but at length, exhausted by her own emotions, she sank into a state of quiescence resembling a trance, from which the sound of footsteps ascending the side of the rock alone aroused her. A low call was heard without, to which Ninon responded, and Pierre entered, bearing the insensible form of his young mistress, which he carefully deposited on a couch of fern at a little distance from the fire.

We shall leave to the reader's imagination the scene that followed; the astonishment and terror of the Lady Clare at finding herself, when guided to the spot by Pierre, alone in the mysterious dwelling of the weird woman, at that dark hour, and in that lonely place; her gratitude and returning confidence as she saw her granddaughter restored to life by the sybil's skill, and Kate's tell-tale eagerness to learn her lover's safety. And we hasten to recapitulate that the dwarf—when, as above related, he had been despatched by Ninon to the neighbouring village—had found the small force promised by his patron already arrived: and begging an audience of their

officer, he was informed that the latter was engaged in conference with the master of the little inn. It was whispered that the arrival in the hamlet of a suspected adherent of the puritanical party, bearing despatches to the Scottish army from their partisans in the south, was the subject of this examination; but none knew, or were likely to penetrate, their leader's views or motives.

This individual, no other than our old acquaintance the Dominican, had wandered abroad, leaving his horse at the little hostelry. The latter animal, however, was unable to contribute in any way towards the elucidation of his master's movements; and as neither wallet, saddle-bag, nor even saddle was to be found, whereby to obtain the smallest clue to his identity; nothing remained for the commanding officer—whom Pierre at once recognised as his patron, despite the helmet which entirely concealed his features—but to proceed in the direction indicated to him by the page, who communicated such information as materially hastened his movements.

Still keeping in view the detention of the suspected envoy, the leader of the party made

directly for the spot, where, as Pierre had informed him, that individual had appeared not many hours ago in company with the Rev. Shimei Haman.

How he was disappointed in his expectation of there securing the object of his search, we have already heard; and also the unexpected tidings which awaited him, and turned his thoughts into a different channel.

We need only to add to this chapter of explanation, that, since nothing further than the presumption of their guilt, as abettors of that night's violence, occurred to criminate the covenanting congregation and their minister, they were—after a few hour's detention, (during which Master Shimei very nearly fell a victim to the conjoined forces of fear and hunger; and so betrayed the carnal motions that he was unable to spiritualise more in that part of the country:)—suffered to return to their respective homes.

## CHAPTER XII.

A Royal army is gone forth,  
To quell the *rising of the North*.—WORDSWORTH.

IT was on the evening succeeding to that signalled by the events above related ; and the sun had been for some hours below the horizon : the subsequent darkness had been in turn replaced by the cold light of a clear moon :—nature had sunk into repose ; and no trace of human life or motion was visible. No stray glimmer of fire or candle beamed from the casements, or through the chinks of the closed shutters, in the hamlets through which the traveller passed, in seeming haste, on his way to the metropolitan city of the north.

As now and then a village clock told the hour, the cavalier spurred his horse to greater speed : but it was near upon midnight, when at length he

arrived before the northern gate of the city, now familiarly known as the Bootham Bar.

The gate of the barbican was closed; and the portcullis down: for the agitated state of the northern counties induced the king, while residing in York, to secure himself against treachery or surprise; by keeping up the military defences of the town, as under a siege. For this purpose the castle was fortified, and placed under the command of Henry Clifford, the last Earl of Cumberland; who was, besides, lieutenant of the northern parts; and whose motto, "Desormais," may still be seen on that part of the castle called Clifford's Tower, beneath the royal escutcheon.

Lyndesay—for it was he—had not calculated upon such an obstacle to the night's repose to which he had looked forward at this, his ultimate destination. He paused, and contemplated the frowning portal before him—a heavy and very ancient Gothic gateway; of Norman arches, flanked by round towers; and at that period fronted by a barbican, which has been but recently removed. The shields of chiselled stone which adorned the exterior, left, as to their devices, as much to the imagination at that time by the faint light of the

moon, as they do at the present, when broad daylight seems only to render the task of assigning form or figure yet more impracticable.

Lyndesay—however—unused to the sight of a fortified town—examined all these details with great curiosity: and when at length he recollected that those very walls and massive towers deprived him of the prospect of the night's lodging so ardently desired; he lost half the mortification and weariness, from the feeling of proud satisfaction which the survey had afforded him, and the reflection that he was about to enter upon regular service. Thus does youth ever long to realise its visions, and to begin in earnest the game of life! The boy with his real watch!—the youth with his real sword!—the young man with his real commission! The novelty once passed—and the promised delight becomes a dull routine of irksome duty.

However, since the heroic part of Albert's nature did not quite overcome the physical, he bethought himself that since he had come so far, it were but foolish to turn back without an attempt at ingress. His eagerness in the cause was, moreover, a little sharpened by the reflection, that the



suburbs, in their present state of desertion, and at so late an hour of the night, offered but the prospect of a cold lodging: whilst he held about him a note of address—forced into his hands by Ninon, when she had encountered him on the borders, and for which he now felt heartily thankful—to a certain housewife, residing in that part of the old city called the King's Staith, on the banks of the river; wherein she was requested to provide him with all necessary accommodation during the period of his stay in York; on the faith of a token of agreement subsisting between her and her correspondent. Albert, therefore, knocked strenuously at the postern, and, for some time, without answer or notice. At length, a rough voice within demanded what was his business—and whence he came.

“The latter point, as I conceive, is of little consequence on the present occasion—but far enough to need repose. My business is with the king.”

“Aye, aye, my master!” replied the drowsy voice within, in a tone which plainly indicated that he had as yet hardly shaken off the fetters of Morpheus; “so say all the young scapegraces

returning from a midnight revel, when they want to lay them down snugly in their feather beds, instead of taking a sobering cold cup of air in the suburbs. No, no! we sentinels know our office—and it is not for us, who are his majesty's servants, to slumber at our posts."

"Better than slumbering at a distance from them! which, if I mistake not, his majesty's servants were in the act of doing"—muttered Lyndesay; then, determined not to give up the point without another effort, he said loudly—

"Hark ye, good master warder!—and if it be any satisfaction to you, hear me protest that no feather bed awaits me to my knowledge in your good city; that I am no roystering wanderer from its walls, having never in my life seen them until to-night; and moreover, if this fail to move you, know that I undertake to prove my right to enter, by credentials which, if you reject, I contentedly submit to passing the night in the fields."

Somewhat worked upon by the tone of the speaker, and the purport of his last words, the man descended to the wicket; and demanded in a surly tone that the traveller would produce the promised passport. "Otherwise, my young mas-

ter," said he, "you stand a chance of cold welcome, and may be a cudgel into the bargain, for thus obstinately disturbing the peace of the king's lieges."

Lyndesay produced the ring which the unknown cavalier had committed to him on the preceding evening, and offered it without remark to the warder's inspection. The change in his deportment was immediate. Proceeding to open the postern with as little delay as possible, he merely added, as Albert passed—

"No offence, I hope, young gentleman—but you should have given the word as a king's messenger. How was I to know, when every scoundrel in the country calls his errand, now-a-days, the business of the state?"

It was useless to undertake to explain to the warder that he was yet far from correct in his appreciation of the traveller's condition; but as the latter knew that at least his purposes were loyal, he did not feel his honesty compromised in availing himself of the magic power of his ring to obtain admittance, since such had probably been in part the intention of the donor. So he resumed the precious trinket, and entering the

bar, rode deliberately onwards down the Petergate.

As without the city, so within, all appeared buried in silence and sleep; and our hero heard no sound save the clattering of his horse's hoofs upon the pavement, till he reached the end of the street; and coming upon a sort of opening or square, suddenly the majestic towers and splendid west façade of the beautiful Minster burst upon his sight!—standing out in the moonlight with that melancholy grandeur, of which the dim shadows and faint cold lights—all still and stedfast as the grave—seem to tell a tale of eternity to those who pass beneath.

At least so thought Lyndesay: for struck, and apparently rivetted to the spot, he stood before the house of God for some minutes, motionless; his eyes wandering over the noble arches and porticos, the massive buttresses rich in carved masonry, the leafy tracery of the lovely western window—till at length he thought, or dreamed, that a sound, as of an organ, met his ear.

Looking down, he perceived that a small door, made, as usual, in one of the principal entrances, was open; and fastening his horse to a railing just

at hand, he immediately entered, and found himself in the broad and spacious nave of the cathedral.


At first he was unable to distinguish anything, save the colours which the moonlight poured upon the pavement through the storied pane; and a brilliant glare of lamp-light—which glowed at the opposite end of the building, in the choir—rendered the surrounding shadows more gloomy.

Towards this he advanced: and as he entered the choir, the peal of the swelling organ died away; and the last hosannahs fell upon his ear; ere all sank into silence. The midnight course of psalms was concluded: and the congregation, of whom there appeared to be some hundreds, rose to depart; but Albert, to whom the scene presented something of the unearthly and ideal, still lingered. He had never before witnessed such a service, and he questioned a man who stood near, in the habit of a verger, as to its meaning. He was informed that the present was one of a course of chants which would continue through the night; by means of which the whole Psalter would be sung once in the twenty-four

hours; that the service was not a customary one of the church, but reserved for remarkable seasons; and on the present occasion performed by command of the good and pious king, who wished thus to usher in the morrow—"when as you doubtless know," the verger continued—"his Majesty is to receive, in council, the proposals from his rebellious Scottish subjects—a day of no little importance, both to our lord the King himself—and to his kingdoms, young master, I can assure you!"

Lyndesay thanked the verger for his information: and since this slight communion with his fellow-man, had brought down his thoughts again to terrestrial things—he was suddenly struck with the recollection of the parting promise, made by the unknown on the preceding evening; with regard to a letter containing tidings of Howard's fate, which he should find in our Lady's chapel.

Thither, accordingly, he bent his steps: and as he entered, from the north aisle, the spacious and brilliantly lighted area behind the high altar, a light drapery moved on the opposite side of the chapel; and a female figure, apparently alarmed



by the footsteps, vanished down the south aisle with the rapidity of lightning. She turned not to regard the intruder, and a light gauze veil was drawn over her face: but, as she rapidly passed, the light of the gorgeous chandelier fell upon it; and revealed the features too deeply graven upon Lyndesay's heart to be mistaken.

He called,—but the vaulted roof alone responded,—then recollecting the indecorum of such a proceeding, he hastily crossed into the opposite aisle; but when he entered there, not a trace of human presence, not a sound of human footsteps met him. All had vanished—save the cold sculptured forms of princes, and priests, and warriors; kneeling with uplifted hands, as in life they had knelt there—or recumbent upon the marble couch, as in death they had been laid there,—and in that vast fabric, Albert felt that he was alone.

He returned; and sought the spot indicated by the cavalier,—the same from which the figure he had pursued had risen on his entrance: and there, in the cavity of a decayed and dilapidated tomb, since removed,\* he discovered two letters ad-

\* The spot is at the present day occupied by the monument of William, Earl of Strafford, son to the unfortunate minister of Charles I.

dressed to himself. The one was in Mr. Howard's writing, and contained but few words.

"Thank God, dear L . . . . . y, for my preservation! In search for my beloved pupil, I had been overwhelmed by some ruins, and, though severely crushed, untouched by fire. All are safe—and to your quondam nurse, after Providence, we owe our restoration. This will rejoice you,—a grateful heart loves to repay benefits,—and through this woman's services you have fully done so. I have heard also of your courage. I am yet weak. Heaven bless and keep you.—Farewell."

The other was a small and delicately folded paper, tied with blue silk, according to the prevailing custom, and bearing on the seal the word "Fidélité." Impatiently did our hero tear open the envelope, but he found within no writing. Simply a tress of long light brown hair—which fell in a graceful ringlet as he held it up from the paper—met his view.

But it was enough. He pressed it to his lips, and then, placing it within his vest, he vowed in life or death to wear no other amulet.



How long he would have lingered on the spot where so lately she had been, and to what wild flights his excited imagination might have led him, we know not: but the verger's rounds, and the arrival of a fresh band of choristers, reminded him that he was in York Cathedral; and that the night was far advanced, while yet much remained to be done.

He therefore hastened to the spot where he had left his horse; and having, by dint of inquiry, discovered the house to which Ninon had directed him as a lodging, he there deposited his saddle-bags; and once more issued forth.

His direction was towards the abode at present occupied by the king; and, in order to reach the *pro tempore* palace, he traversed the streets and lanes of the old city; in which, late, or rather early as was the hour, for it was long after midnight, the inhabitants in many places had not betaken themselves to rest. The taverns were open; and here and there a group of three or four stood together under the shadow of a projecting portico; while they eyed the passer-by as one who could not possibly be there with an honest motive.

To an individual of one of these groups Lyndesay addressed himself; anxious to account for the unusual state of excitement, both in appearance and demeanour, of all whom he had encountered. To his inquiries, the man only returned for answer,—

“Nay, ma’aster, we be’ent quite so Yorkshire nor that, neither. Ask thee own tartan what thee be’est come here for, and then may be thee’ll know what we be a’ counselling on.”

“In good sooth, friend,” returned Albert, “I am entirely ignorant as to any connexion my tartan can boast with your consultations. Pray enlighten me a little further; as I can answer for it that my plaid, like its wearer, has no very definite errand in this city of yours.”

“More fuil he that brings it lacking one! And thee would make us believe thee’s not one of the Scotch lads, that came in at sunset with Montrose!”

“No more one of Montrose’s followers, than yourself, my friend,—and so I wish you a very good night, and thanks for your information, albeit but stealthily bestowed!”

So saying, our hero proceeded,—satisfied from what he had heard, that the bustle and confusion of the night owed its rise to the arrival of the Scotch commissioners; who were, as he had been informed, to meet the king in council on the morrow. This news, for reasons which will presently appear, added wings to the speed with which he hastened towards the palace: and when he had reached it, and found all closed, as might have been anticipated from the hour, he eagerly inquired of the sentinels, if there were no means of obtaining admission. The answer was so decisively in the negative, that he found it necessary to desist from his object for that night: and the first dawn of morning saw him again under the portico.

Of his success we can only say—that through the powerful influence of his ring, he prevailed with some of the attendants to transmit to the king's hands a folded paper, which had been the subject of his extreme anxiety, both then and on the preceding evening; also, that his Majesty graciously appointed a time, in compliance with the earnest solicitations which were made to him

through the officials, and perhaps from other reasons known only to himself, for vouchsafing to to our hero a personal interview.

It is now necessary that we should go back a little in our story; and account to those interested in Lyndesay's movements for his somewhat tardy appearance at York; for the place where we last parted from him was situated in the same county with that city; and, therefore, hardly twenty-four hours' journey from it.

For this purpose we must remind the reader, that, though our hero's terrified steed had broken away from the flaming buildings on the night of the fire, yet, as he came utterly unprovided with any furniture but a halter, his master was under the necessity of seeking accoutrements for the animal before he could proceed on his journey; and for this object he led him for two or three miles until he arrived at the next village; the same from which the military force had lately issued, and the present residence of Lilies and her father; for though the latter gentleman loved to *preach* in the desert, he loved *not* the meat of locusts and wild honey; but ever relaxed his over-taxed powers in a comfortable chimney-

corner, and refreshed his lips with some of Nicholas Grabb's best brown ale. Indeed, the little village tavern had become so regular a domicile for the worthy divine, that his daughter either thought it necessary on this evening of his compulsory absence, to explain the circumstance to Dame Grabb, or she had some other equally urgent motive for appearing there; for when Albert Lyndesay arrived at the little inn, for the purpose of ascertaining where he might procure the articles of which he stood in need, he found, on entering the house, the young lady in strict conference with another individual,—not, indeed, the innkeeper's wife, nor was it Nicholas himself—but a well-looking, broad-shouldered, and strongly-built young Yorkshireman, whose awkward embarrassment gave to Albert's entrance the air of an intrusion.

With the lady the case was different. She immediately recognised in Lyndesay's easy carriage, and the slight inclination with which, on entering, he acknowledged her presence, the habitual politeness which distinguishes the higher class of society,—that high bred courtesy which goes so directly to the female heart! Whether old or

young, fair or ill favoured, country born or city bred, women in all stations, and under every circumstance, eagerly accept its homage!

Already prepossessed, therefore, in our hero's favour, Liliás listened with great interest to his inquiry, as to the possibility of obtaining the necessary equipments for his steed; of which, as he informed her, accident had deprived him.

Now it happened, at the period of which we write, that in an obscure village in the north of the county of York, harness-makers and saddlers, far from flourishing, had never been heard of: indeed the making of a saddle in those days was by no means the simple operation that is in our own; much labour being wasted upon its adornment; and the machine, when completed, being more than twice the bulk of a modern one; encumbered as it was with useless ornament, in the shape of rows of bright brass nails, fringe, and frequently rich trappings of cloth or velvet.

It was, therefore, only in the large towns that so considerable an article could be fabricated; and Liliás, when informed of our hero's present need, looked grave for a few moments, as she contemplated the impracticability of supplying it. All of

a sudden a plan seemed to strike her and ; clapping her little hands together, she assured him that nothing could be more easy than to comply with his wish,—that her father had in his possession a saddle and the rest of the furniture for a horse, which had been entrusted to him by a friend, for the purpose of his disposing of them : and she begged to know what sum the gentleman was disposed to give.

“ Anything in reason, fair maid,” replied our hero ; “ but the question might have been more satisfactorily answered after seeing them.”

“ Hasten, Walter, to saddle the gentleman’s horse !” quickly resumed the damsel. And whispering a few words in further direction to her companion, who immediately left the house, she continued—

“ Unless you can bribe me by that bright ring upon your finger, it must be a part of our bargain that you do not even *see* your purchase here—nay—nor stop to survey it until to-morrow’s light—if, as I imagine, you are going to journey during the night. *Exhibiting our possessions is not always safe, you see !* What do you say to my proposal ?”

Her whimsical remark had reminded Albert that it was indeed the height of folly to wear exposed the valuable jewel which he had but now received from the Cavalier; and, taking a hint which he could not help suspecting was meant as such; he took off the ring, which he carefully concealed in his vest; and gaily rejoined,—

“No, no, pretty mistress!—the sight of thy bargain were too dearly purchased. I thank thee, however, alike for thy sagacious foresight and thy ready assistance; and it were unmannerly not to trust thee in return. Name the price of thy goods, and I consent to thy conditions.”

She named a sum, which Albert quickly told out to her: and without seeking to penetrate further into a mystery which appeared to him to take its rise merely in the caprice of his companion; Lyndesay mounted the horse which the obedient Walter, more dexterous in performing the duties of a groom than those of a host, had by this time brought, ready caparisoned, into the yard of the inn. In compliance with his agreement with Lilius, Albert did not linger to examine his new acquisition; nor would he, indeed, by the obscured light of the moon, have been able to



take any very minute observations upon it; but, bidding a friendly adieu to the couple who had, in the absence of the host and mistress of the tavern, so competently filled their posts, he proceeded rapidly on his journey.

His road lay across one of those wild, flat moors, for which the picturesque and richly wooded scenery of the northern part of Yorkshire is frequently all of a sudden exchanged. Not a tree was in sight—the way-marks were uncertain, and the ill-defined road had nothing to distinguish it from the numerous beaten tracks which intersected the common for miles in every direction. It had never occurred to our hero, in his abstraction, that he might possibly take the wrong path; but as the darkness gave way to the first streaks of morning, and reminded him how long he had been on the road, he in vain looked round for signs of the town to which he had, as he imagined, directed his course. Instead of this, he found himself in the midst of a deep ravine, or valley of rocks.

Throughout the prospect appeared no signs of cultivation; neither were there any of life save the exuberant masses of the purple heather, and

the wild waves of fern which hung upon the declivities. To increase the difficulties of his situation, he felt himself assailed by an unaccountable faintness and languor, which threatened at every moment to deprive him of the power of keeping his seat. Then he for the first time discovered that the sword-wound which he had received in the shoulder had not, as he supposed, been immediately stanchèd; but that the blood had been slowly, but constantly, trickling from it; and had at length penetrated his doublet. The exercise of riding had of course increased the evil; and at present there seemed no choice but to continue his course until he could meet with some shelter where he might repose for a while, and apply the necessary remedies. Meantime, since his voice had nearly failed, he drew out a small whistle, which he carried about him, and with a long, shrill blast, made the surrounding hills echo again.

In the hope of being heard he was not disappointed; for presently over a neighbouring rock there peeped out a little rough peasant head, quickly followed by a corresponding body; from

which—the head we mean—there issued an exclamation at sight of Albert—

“Hey now!—what now?—ma-aster!—I thou-rt it was t’ muther!”

“Who is your mother, my lad?” was the rejoinder; “and how far off does she live?”

The boy, who either was unable to comprehend the sense of the first question, or had but faint ideas on the subject of the inquiry, left it unanswered. To the second, when repeated, he replied, “Up at’ whome.”

Lyndesay followed the direction to which he pointed: and after toiling up a path so rugged that himself and his horse, for he had dismounted, had equal difficulty in keeping their footing; he reached a low wooden cabin, of which the door was opened to him by a broad and hearty looking housewife. Though evidently surprised at his appearance, besmeared as he was with blood, she yet offered him, with the true hospitality of her race, all shelter or assistance in her power to bestow. She bade her son, the boy whom he had first seen, look to the gentleman’s horse and loosen his saddle-girths; and in the same breath

rated him for leaving the few lean sheep that he was tending, when our hero encountered him, with the vain hope of their detecting food enough for pasture on the surrounding common.

Lyndesay, after applying with the assistance of the matron's skill and experience the necessary quantum of lint and plaster to his wound; and finding that, though unimportant in the first instance, the irritation of the part had become considerable through his neglect; decided, in compliance with the advice of his hostess, to rest for some hours before recommencing the journey, in which he had so far made such inauspicious progress. He therefore thankfully acceded to her invitation to partake of a breakfast of oaten bread and curds: and, condemning himself to a strict repose until noon, he was not sorry when abstracted from the dulness which his wise resolution entailed upon him, by the entrance of the little shepherd, bearing in his arms his own huge saddle.

It will be remembered that he had been prohibited from viewing this possession until daylight; and even if his curiosity had not been overpowered, as it was, by more interesting

subjects of thought, it is probable that a passing glance or two would then have satisfied him, in the ordinary course of things. But now that his acquisition presented itself to him, just as he longed for some object of amusement; he welcomed its appearance: and, calling to the boy to bring it to him, he commenced an examination of the machine in all its details.

The saddle was nearly of the weight and size of a modern portmanteau, were the latter article slightly accommodated to the shape of a horse's back. The lining and trappings were of saffron colour; and it was loaded with ornamental work. On the crupper was a curious plating of brass, which excited Lyndesay's particular attention. He handled it; and in doing so, touched a spring, which, communicating with the holster, immediately caused a little door or flap on the underside to spring open; thereby revealing a large hollow interior.

The contents of this secret cavity for the present appeared to be a large packet of written papers rolled together; also a smaller one in the form of a letter, which fell to the ground as our hero drew forth the other manuscripts. He

took it up, and read the address; and if he had before suspected that treason lurked beneath all this cautiously arranged concealment, the direction of the envelope left no doubt of the fact.

No time, he was aware, ought to be lost in placing it in the hands of the King: and bitterly did he regret the constraint laid upon him by his extreme weakness, which compelled him to a few hours' rest. He tried to sleep in order to wile away the time; which to his impatience seemed an age; but, anxious and excited, he found the effort useless. Then came various surmises as to the owner of the saddle; and a conjecture as to whether the young maiden at the tavern were privy to its contents, and had knowingly transferred the treasonable piece of furniture to himself. Her significant manner led him to conclude her not altogether an unconscious agent in the business. Afterwards occurred to him the natural suggestion that the other manuscripts might contribute towards the elucidation of the subject.

He accordingly opened them; but found therein no political correspondence. Apparently they contained a connected though unfinished memoir of the

extraction and life of some individual, written by himself, but furnishing no name by which to trace its author. As the narrative was lengthy, and bore no connexion with any subject of present interest, Albert restored it to its hiding-place, with intention to peruse it when at leisure; and feeling refreshed by a rude but hospitable entertainment, wherein eggs, meal porridge, and good ale formed the staple—he proceeded towards York.

We must here add a word or two, in order to acquit our little friend Lilius of any serious intention to bring her friends, or rather her father's friends, into difficulty or danger; by betraying their share in the hostile conspiracies of the disaffected party in the state.

Though high spirited, and disposed at all times to take the management of her own cause into her own hands, she was incapable of real malice.

When, therefore, her lover and herself had in their evening's stroll, watched the arrival of the Dominican at the tavern; and, immediately afterwards, marked unseen his cautious conveyance of that important saddle into her father's dwelling; far from its less secure, but more natural, place of

deposit in the inn ; she had secretly determined to retaliate upon him for the severe and threatening language, which his anger at her manœuvres had led him insolently to inflict upon herself when last they met.

For this purpose, his evidently cherished possession, thus placed within her own grasp, afforded the precise instrument ; and from the time of his leaving the house with her father, she commenced her cogitations as to the method of revenge : but the other events of that night had displaced such resolutions, until the question put to her by Albert decided her at once as to her measures. In these she believed herself to be merely depriving her adversary of a favourite piece of property, and causing him delay, and perhaps ridicule ; in any case, gratifying her own love of the ridiculous. For Liliás's somewhat inaccurate notions of *meum* and *tuum*, we can offer no other apology than that they were such as she had learned by habit to tolerate, if not by principle to approve ; since neither by precept nor example had she been taught by her parent any other. And, indeed, as she argued to the readily



convinced Walter, "if master Jacobs get the money, where is the dishonesty? he will receive more than the worth and buy another; only he must fain trudge it on foot meanwhile: and so let him, if he dare, open his lips again to threaten and rate a young English maiden!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

If to expedience principle must bow,  
Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent now :  
If cowardly concession still must feed  
The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede :  
If generous loyalty must stand in awe  
Of subtle treason, with his mask of law :  
If office help the faction to conspire,  
And they who should extinguish, fan the fire ;—  
Then will the sceptre be a straw : the crown  
Sit loosely, like the thistle's crest of down,  
To be blown off at will, by power that spares it,  
In cunning patience, from the head that wears it.

WORDSWORTH.

OUR readers are no doubt aware, that, at the period of the treaty of Ripon, antecedently to which King Charles and several of his nobility made a short sojourn at York ; the command of the royal army, in consequence of the illness of

Northumberland, had devolved upon the Earl of Strafford; whose firm loyalty as a subject, and unshaken attachment to the Episcopal Church, mistaken by many for a bias towards Popery, together with his energetic measures as a minister, had raised him at this time to a pre-eminence, fatal alike to himself and his master. Aware that treason lurked beneath the friendly smile of many around him, Lord Strafford would at once have adopted those bold and decisive measures towards the agitators, which Charles's tenderness for his subjects, and religious abhorrence of civil warfare, induced him to defer until too late.

The King had summoned a High Council of State to meet in the Guildhall of the city of York; for the purpose of receiving preliminaries of the approaching treaty, conveyed in a message from the Scottish leaders; of which the Earl of Montrose, accompanied by other commissioners, was the bearer. Much excitement prevailed amongst the nobles; as the conduct of the coming treaty of Ripon probably hung upon the result of this audience: and men's minds were under violent party bias as to the legitimate and con-

stitutional means of restoring peace to their unhappy country.

At the council-table were already seated the Earl of Strafford, the President ; with the Marquis of Hamilton, whose dark and moody brow carried something of apprehension and distrust ; the Lord Falkland, melancholy and thoughtful ; the Earls of Hertford, Salisbury, Warwick, and Holland ; the Lords Saville, Howard of Esric, Southampton, Brooke, and Paulet ; with others. And presently Charles himself entered ; slowly, and with that kingly dignity which characterised his every movement ; and, bowing gravely to the assembly, he took his seat at the head of the council-board.

Charles was at this time hardly forty years of age ; but the serious expression of his pale and thoughtful countenance is familiar to all who are acquainted with the pictures of Vandyke. His figure was tall and manly ; and his whole demeanour expressive of majesty—a majesty, which, even when subsequent miseries deprived it of its usual externals, proved not, as the proverb says, a jest ; but, like the setting sun, shone in its decline with a glow but more exquisitely softened and

refined as the evening clouds passed across its disk.

He wore his usual dress of black velvet, relieved by rich point lace collar and ruffles; and as he took his seat every eye was fixed upon him; for on this occasion his brow was shaded with more than its usual cast of thought, and something of sorrow seemed to sit upon it.

“We give you a good morrow, Lords!” said Charles, with a somewhat stately bend—“We summoned you to-day, to profit by your wisdom—as doubtless you are aware—in the conduct of the treaty with our rebellious subjects in Scotland. But first we must seek your counsel in another matter: for rebels lurk nearer home—around our very throne for aught we know. This letter”—and the king, as he spoke, produced the paper, the transmission of which to his royal hands we so faithfully recorded in our last chapter—“of which my Lord Strafford will presently proclaim the contents—contains implications on our faithful peers which for a sovereign to credit were grief and indignation,—for a subject to merit were sin and shame. Intercepted by a faithful adherent, it hath this morning reached our hands; and

though, my lords, we spurn its vile calumny as to the *traitors*, yet is it obvious that in some quarter there exists *treason*. The Earl of Strafford will declare its purport."

The King delivered the letter into Strafford's hands; while the Marquis of Hamilton—pale with apprehension—trembled lest, in the subject of the present inquiry, he should recognise the papers so mysteriously withdrawn from the custody of his niece; and which, recovered by the Dominican through his emissary Laurence, we need hardly say, never reached the hands of Hamilton. The fear of betraying to Montrose their importance had kept him silent on Margaret's announcing their loss, during the interview related in our first chapter. In like manner, his dread that the *éclat* of any act of violence might reach the ear of the king, and so betray his secret meeting with his niece, and, perhaps, its treasonable object,—had been the all-powerful curb to the wrath which had else exploded on his first finding Montrose in her society.

But no one was sufficiently at ease to note the eager gaze which Hamilton bent upon the paper

in Lord Strafford's hand: and the latter nobleman, after an attentive study of its contents, proceeded to obey the king's command—

“Your Majesty and the Council will, I think, find reason for the opinion, that this letter contains a most treasonable and wicked attempt to excite and foment rebellion in the sister kingdom of Scotland; by the assurance of sympathy and assistance from a party amongst your Majesty's English subjects.”

The Marquis of Hamilton once more breathed.

“The leaders of this party”—continued the Earl—“whose names are here affixed—invite the northern rebels to a coalition; and propose to act simultaneously with them. Much more follows—relating to the terms of alliance, means of procuring arms, provisions, &c. And the whole concludes by the signature of six noble names; professedly subscribed by the hands of their owners. Is it your Majesty's pleasure that I should proclaim them?”

“In God's name, yes!” said Charles.

And Strafford read, in the midst of a breathless silence, the name and title successively of six English peers; each one of whom was present

in the hall. The list commenced with the Earl of Southampton, and ended with the Lord Saville.

The five first named peers, with common impulse, started to their feet,—surprise and indignation depicted on every feature,—but Saville stirred not; till, on the increasing tumult, he made a move towards leaving the hall.

But King Charles's voice was again heard.

“My Lord Saville, we cannot spare you from our councils. Lords, we beseech you,—peace!—and once more take your seats.”

“Pardon, my liege!—Not till we have sworn, on the Holy Gospel—before Heaven and your Majesty—utter innocence of this accursed treason—and ignorance of the authors and abettors of yon vile forgery!” haughtily returned Southampton. And, after his example, with common impulse, each took the oath he proposed.

“We do believe you, Lords,” said Charles. “Bring hither the Record Book.”

The volume, containing the minutes of preceding councils, was laid before the King; who, as he opened it, calmly inquired of Strafford, what date was assigned to the signatures attached to



the letter. The Earl gave it: and a look of unaccustomed complacency illumined Charles's features on hearing it.

“We find the same date here”—said the King, as he turned the leaves of the book—“On that day, we held our last Council; at which each one of the noblemen, who, according to this letter, signed the document on that very day in London—was present,—excepting, we think, the Viscount Saville. Observe, my Lord Strafford! the five superscriptions in this book, written on that occasion; do they resemble those you hold in your hand? Now, noble gentlemen! methinks we have gone far to prove an *alibi*. The writer of this letter, whoever he be, gives the Scottish leaders credit for knowing but little of the movements of our court. And you, my Lord Saville! were, as we well remember, summoned to attend our Council; and you pleaded your lady's illness as an excuse for absence.”

Saville replied without hesitation, that he had passed the preceding month with his family on his estates in Somersetshire.

“Yet 'tis most strange,” said Charles, steadfastly regarding him. “Your letter of that very

day, which we find here amongst the papers, is dated *London*: and the handwriting bears a singular resemblance to that in which this instrument of treason is conveyed. My Lord!" and the King sorrowfully shook his head—"albeit in very heaviness of heart, we must command you into custody until further evidence be produced: and we know not wherein we have injured you, Lord Saville! that thus you should unite in conspiracy with our foes."

Certain that accumulated evidence would but insure his ruin, Lord Saville threw himself on his knees before his sovereign, and at once confessed the guilty act of forging the document; in concert with Grimstone, St. John, and other members of the lower house. At the same time he cast himself on his majesty's mercy for forgiveness.

Grief and indignation for a time kept Charles silent.

"Your counsel, my Lords!"—at length he said; "may we extend to this unhappy man the blessed prerogative of pardon which God has given us?"

"Not if your Majesty regards your own safety and that of these three kingdoms," answered

Strafford. "Offenders must meet with justice, or treason will become sport for children."

"And you, my Lord Falkland!" said Charles, "have you no opinion to give us?"

Falkland—whose fate it was generally to be opposed to the severe and somewhat arbitrary policy of Strafford—answered: "My Liege! could my lips carry pardon, another breath should liberate—not only the suppliant at your Majesty's feet—but thousands, aye, thousands more."

"We honour you, my Lord! for the spirit which suggests those words: but say—is it mercy to leave the innocent without the protection of law, that we may spare ourselves the pain of punishing the guilty? Where shall the injured seek redress—where shall the oppressed find relief—if we, the delegate of our Maker, confound all distinctions of right and wrong? But enough, my Lord!—we but sought to show that in pardoning thousands you were probably wronging tens of thousands. And now to the point! Lord Viscount Saville!—you have broken the laws of your country—you have betrayed the trust of a privy councillor—and violated the sacredness of private confidence: but you have wronged *us*, and *us* only; your treason

is aimed solely at our own head, and has for object our personal defeat and disaster. We ask of you no promise—we receive from you no pledge. The Lord Strafford, whose judgment we rate as of the best and wisest, warns us that we compromise our safety if we pardon rebellion. Be it so, then—For once we yield to the dictates of our own heart—and may ourself and he never need the mercy we now extend to you!—Lord Saville, you are free!”

In haste and trepidation, the agitated nobleman seized the King’s hand; and, imprinting a kiss upon it, arose and hurried from the apartment.

The next moment the heralds sounded the entrance of the Scotch commissioners.

The Earl of Montrose was on this occasion habited as befitted a court cavalier of the first rank. He wore a doublet of rich crimson velvet embroidered in gold, with large loose sleeves; the collar covered by a fall of the richest lace, with that peculiar edging now called vandyke. A short cloak was slung negligently across one shoulder. The deep lace ruffles at the knees—corresponding with the falling band on the collar—edged the wide boots which met the fringed hose at the knee. He held in his hand the broad leafed Flemish

beaver hat, with satin hat-band and splendid plume of feathers. The Milan sword hung from the gorgeous sword-belt of azure and gold, which was slung over the left shoulder. As he entered the council-chamber, and gracefully and reverently bent on one knee before his sovereign, admiration of his courtly mien and noble exterior might have been read in the countenance of all assembled there; whilst a slight sigh escaped the monarch, that one who would have formed so distinguished an accession to his council had taken his stand decidedly on the side of treason and disaffection.

“We give you all hail, my Lord Earl! albeit your appearance be somewhat of the tardiest. We and our faithful nobles have been in expectation of your arrival for many days.”

“I humbly crave your Majesty’s pardon for the delay,” said Montrose. “Could any other means have been discovered of averting imminent danger from some I value more than life, than my own attendance—your Majesty should not have had reason to complain.”

As the Earl spoke, he glanced at the Marquis of Hamilton; who—instantly suspecting the object of his delay; which had been, in fact, to protect Mar-

garet until he beheld her safely placed under the care of Queen Henrietta at Whitehall—turned to Charles; and said with an air of bitter raillery:

“The Earl of Montrose, my Liege! has so numerous a list of assignations, that we must not marvel if his knight errantry leads him occasionally to postpone an affair of such slight importance as the peace of two kingdoms.”

“The Marquis of Hamilton, at least, cannot be accused of suffering *individual* duties, however sacred, to interfere with his ardour in public concerns—would I could say in the public *good!*” rejoined Montrose, with a slight and scornful bend towards the object of his remark.

“A truce, Lords, to personal contest! And now, Earl of Montrose, what message hast thou from our rebellious subjects in Scotland?”

The brow of Montrose contracted for a moment, as if he laboured under some extraordinary excitement. His fine eye lost its bold and fearless expression, and for an instant sought the ground; and when on raising it he met the mild yet serious gaze of Charles fixed upon him, the colour mounted to his forehead.

Shaking off this momentary feeling as he hastily

drew forth his tablets, the Earl proceeded to deliver his message.

“ Your Majesty’s loyal and devoted subjects in Scotland have made choice of me, to present to your Majesty their humblest protestations of duty and obedience to your Majesty’s government, together with affection for your sacred person. And they protest most humbly their utter sorrow and despair at the late most unhappy and unlooked for engagement in arms, which took place at Newburn ; wherein fell many of your Majesty’s subjects : and they solemnly declare that they were forced into the same contrary to their will or intention ; through the opposition made by some malignant and evil disposed persons, against their marching to join your gracious Majesty, and to do you good service. And they do beseech your Majesty to accept their contrition and remorse for the aforesaid misadventure !—And they also take leave humbly to lament—that your Majesty should listen to the wilful misrepresentations of certain envious and ungodly persons—who have wrought upon your Majesty’s mind the belief that your most dutiful and affectionate subjects in these parts do entertain thought, wish, or intention

against your Majesty's government, which God preserve! And your faithful subjects humbly pray your Majesty to restore to them the confidence and trust which you were wont to repose in them! and they reverently beseech your Majesty to withdraw the armed force which certain evil disposed persons have wickedly advised your Majesty to oppose to your peace-loving and dutiful subjects, united in the solemn League and Covenant. And they most humbly and respectfully invite your Majesty to subscribe the good and holy Covenant, which the land of your forefathers, as a second Israel, has received from above. And they also respectfully represent to your Majesty—on condition of your consenting to the withdrawal of the most profane and papistical liturgy, together with the abrogation of the canons and the articles of Perth; also on your Majesty's graciously permitting the abolition of that anti-christian and popish order of men, the bishops, both in this country and in South Britain—they, your most devoted and obedient subjects do profess and promise that they will instantly lay down their arms, and will approve themselves, as they have ever



done, your Majesty's most faithful and loyal servants."

A pause of some length succeeded to this strange message, containing, as it did, the most obstinate resistance to the royal will, couched under terms dutiful and submissive in the extreme. In uttering those professions of duty and affection, a transient expression of scorn passed across the noble countenance of Montrose, and the slightest possible curl of the upper lip seemed to indicate that his heart responded not to the sentiments his tongue was compelled to utter,—that a bold defiance, unsoftened by flattery, and unqualified by conditions, would have better suited his lips.

"The Scottish League have ill chosen their envoy," observed the Marquis of Hamilton, "if the object of the mission be to propitiate the sovereign they have offended; for, by my soul! such a sentiment would seem to be the very reverse of that indicated in the tone and manner of the Earl of Montrose."

"Whether open defiance or secret conspiracy be the more loyal, my Lord Hamilton, I leave to the Council to judge," responded Montrose;

his eye kindling as he turned its glance on Hamilton, and his high and chivalrous spirit, curbed during the delivery of his commission, once more bursting forth.

“Let the Commissioners withdraw for the present!” said Charles, in a tone of decision: “And when we have deliberated with our Council on this matter, we shall again request their attendance.”

With a reverent obeisance, Montrose left the hall, and a stormy debate ensued. The Marquis of Hamilton used every argument to induce the King to comply with the demands of the Covenanters, or at least give them fair promises of doing so, contending that a direct refusal would but inflame their zeal for a cause they had learned to consider so holy. The Lords Hertford and Falkland inclined to a compromise on the King's side, in consideration of proportionate concessions on the part of the Covenanters, and in this view of the subject many concurred; while Strafford, supported by the Lords Southampton, Howard, and Bristol, severely deprecated all idea of accommodation—representing that the insolence already exhibited in the message to his Majesty, would but increase a thousand-fold on finding itself en-

countered by a weak and hesitating policy ; that the present intemperate zeal of the Covenanters deserved no more respect than the headlong passion of a wayward child, who would be chastised into obedience, rather than humoured in his violence ; that the rout at Newburn merited not consideration, as a motive for desisting from opposition, since the commencement of civil disturbances is always marked by irresolution on the one side or the other, as, unlike any other war, the crime of treason assuredly lies to the charge of the unsuccessful ; that a slight panic on this account need not to discourage the King's troops, since they themselves had gained an advantage in a subsequent skirmish ; that the King was losing more by inactivity and irresolution than he could possibly do by defeat ; and finally, Lord Strafford implored the King to allow him, at the head of the army, to put the matter to the arbitration of arms.

Charles weighed attentively the opinions on either side, and after an interval of deep thought, during which he seemed to be taking his resolution, he directed the Commissioners to be recalled to the council-chamber.

On their appearance the monarch rose from his seat, and with a calmness and self-possession remarkable at so exciting a moment, he delivered his answer to the Scottish nobles:—

“My Lord of Montrose—We would first say to you personally, that as among our misguided subjects there are none whom we honour and esteem more than your Lordship, so could none have been more welcome as the mediator of peace and unanimity. Would that such had been the probable result of your negotiation! To the message you have brought from the Scottish leaders, take this answer. We thank them for their dutiful expressions of attachment and allegiance to our person and government, and we have yet to learn that we have done aught which should render us liable to forfeit either. We accept their apology for the seditious and rebellious massacre of our troops at Newburn, and we are ready, on submission, to offer pardon to such as have been unwarily led to partake in it—and if they refuse to accept this pardon and forgiveness, then must their blood be upon their own heads!

“We hear indeed with some surprise their

complaint that we have listened to evil counsels, and thereby have been induced to entertain distrust and jealousy. We bid them lay their hands on their hearts, and ask themselves if ~~we~~ we have not the like cause to complain of evil and wicked counsels, which have engendered and fostered distrusts and jealousies amongst themselves? Were this a time for mirth, we could even smile at the infatuation which prompts their request, the request of our own liege subjects, that we would withdraw our forces, legally and legitimately constituted, in order to leave open to their lawless bands the road to treasonable violence and frantic zeal.

“ Tell them, my Lord, that we need not to be reminded that Scotland is our native land, and dearly do we love her, and thrice happy would it be for us and for her if she clung as fondly and as proudly to the recollections of her ancient worth and glory under her Bruces and her Stuarts as do we! but we would also tell them, that when they presumptuously arrogate to themselves the character of a second Israel—when they affirm themselves to be the recipients of a peculiar revelation—they virtually contradict the

whole tenor of Scripture and prophecy, and are themselves the subjects of 'a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' We know of no covenant received from above since the testament that was sealed by the blood of Christ: and we acknowledge no league amongst our subjects for the support of doctrines unknown in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

"We offer to defer, until they shall be able to receive it, the use of that 'form of sound words,' which we had appointed to be read in the churches of our native land; lamenting, as we must ever do, the error of which they are guilty, in preferring their own ignorant effusions to the composition of the united and inspired wisdom of the Church. We are content also to abandon for the present the canons and the articles of Perth—but we refuse—aye—solemnly and finally refuse to listen to any mention of abolishing that holy order, the Episcopal Fathers in the Church. We bid those who term them antichristian and papistical, to beware lest in doing so they arraign as antichristian the apostle Paul, who commanded the ordination of 'bishops and elders in every church.' We bid them trace the course of the

ministry from that holy apostle until now, and thank God that his model has been adopted and continued through the Church Universal—a Church—in our own land—blessed be God! reformed and purified, but not surrendered—and so long as we, by the grace of God, continue her head, we have sworn to uphold her doctrine, her discipline, and her institutions.

“On this point, my Lord! tell them that our decision is unalterable. Further concessions we will not make—all that reason could demand, or we in honour grant, we have yielded in our tenderness and affection towards our native country. Bid them ask themselves wherein we have violated any of her laws, or disregarded her interests and her welfare! and, need we say, what has been the return! With them, my Lord, it rests to restore the happy state of peace and union they have so rudely violated—to prevent the commencement of civil struggles which our children and our children’s children may have cause to rue!

“Should they refuse reconciliation, and despise forgiveness, we have but one course left. We must preserve the prerogative which we hold—

we must support the throne which we inherit—  
and so, God defend the right !”

Had Charles exhibited equal firmness on subsequent occasions, England might still have been saved.



## CHAPTER XIV.

"And O," said Ronald, "Owned of Heaven !  
Say, is my erring youth forgiven,  
By falsehood's arts from duty driven,  
Who rebel falchion drew ;  
Yet ever to thy deeds of fame,  
Even while I strove against thy claim,  
Paid homage just and true."

LORD OF THE ISLES.

It was at the dead of night, and the deep toned clock of York Cathedral was tolling the hour of twelve, interrupting the breathless stillness which pervaded the spacious chamber in which he sat alone, that Charles the First raised his head from the perusal of the volume before him, which he had been regarding with intense study, (and which contained his favourite collection of essays by Dr. Saunderson upon cases of

conscience;) and turning towards the door which gave into an ante-room at one end of the apartment, he uttered the word—"Herbert!"

In a moment the faithful valet appeared, and stood waiting his master's commands. The King continued,

"Inquire if our young Cavalier have yet arrived, and if so, lose no time in admitting him to our presence. To-day hath been one of excitement and fatigue, and, God knows, we stand in need of the rest our meanest subjects are now enjoying."

Herbert bowed and retired, and the King continued pacing the apartment, as if under the influence of some agitating reflections. The chamber in which he was about to give an audience, was large but somewhat low, and the walls and ceiling were divided in compartments of richly carved oak. It stood, and still stands, in that old house, then belonging to the Dukes of Buckingham, and subsequently to the Wentworths, which has finally merged into the good George Hotel of the city of York.

The room was dimly lighted, and so partially, that the rival rays of the moon had power to penetrate into the chamber, through the stained

and storied pane of a deep oriel at the opposite end. The window exhibited in its numerous compartments, the heraldic bearings of various noble families ; whilst the centre panel was occupied by the royal arms, with the insignia of the Garter. The initials C.R., and the truly regal motto, "Dieu et mon droit!" by reason of their hue of burnished gold, shone out with peculiar lustre, as the moonbeams, passing through them, shed a melancholy light upon the oaken floor, and upon the dark but picturesque moveables of the same material, which formed the furniture of the room.

A cumbrous chimney-piece of more than ordinarily elaborate carving, projected over a hearth on which the pile of smouldering ashes, rather than the temperature of the apartment, indicated the late presence of a huge fire of faggots: but the chilliness which ever follows the extinction of a wood fire, was now beginning to be felt. The minster bells still rang out the midnight chimes: and, as Charles paced the room, his eye constantly fixed upon the gorgeous window, he could have fancied a voice in every peal. The hour—the situation—and the circumstances in which he was placed—the solitude—the exciting

events of the day, and the melancholy reaction which usually overtakes a spirit wound up for an occasion; all these acted powerfully upon his mind: and, as imagination clothed the pealing sounds with significance, they served to deepen the solemnity of feelings, already too powerfully wrought upon.

At length the door of the antechamber was opened, and in another second Herbert entered, ushering into the presence an individual closely muffled in a cloak. For the abruptness of the intrusion the faithful attendant apologised, on the ground of the king's peremptory order, that no delay should be used; and having received an answer indicative of his Majesty's approval, Herbert withdrew.

The other individual, still disguised by his large Spanish cloak, remained standing a few paces within the room, on entering which he had made a low obeisance.

“Approach! Albert Lyndesay!” said the monarch. “And now, good youth, reveal to us the secret which thou saidst must be for our private ear alone. Advance towards this table,

and speak low ; for in palaces, mark us, youth, the very walls have ears."

The stranger approached at the summons ; and when within a pace or two of the chair of state in which the King had placed himself to receive his communication, he cast aside his mantle as the full glow of the lamp fell upon his stately figure, and revealed to view,—not the form of Albert Lyndesay, but that of the noble Earl of Montrose.

A momentary start alone betrayed the quickened throbbings of the monarch's heart, as he saw before him, in disguise, and by means of an entrance so stealthy and unexpected, the subject whom he had ever held as the most powerful and formidable, because the most generous, of his foes.

Erecting his figure, however, with regal dignity, he proceeded to inquire in a tone, calm, though subdued,—

" And what, my Lord Earl, may be the purport of your visit to us at this unseasonable hour of the night, and after a fashion so abrupt and clandestine ? "

The Lord of Montrose threw himself on his knees at the feet of his sovereign; and clasping his hands together, he uttered with emotion, simply the words—

“My Royal Master!”

The King for a few moments awaited in silence a further answer; then, in a tone of which the assumed sternness faltered beneath the tide of tenderer feeling, he replied,—

“Would that on our side we could term thee our faithful subject, gallant and noble Earl! but say, what is thy errand here to-night?”

Montrose paused to master contending emotions. When he spoke, it was in a firm voice, though his countenance denoted extreme agitation.

“My Liege, you ask my errand!—it is this. To pray,—most humbly, and without a reserve,—to crave your royal pardon, for the fact that this hand has been raised in alliance with those who hold in scorn your Majesty’s sacred and anointed head,—to renounce for ever all communion with them,—and here upon my knees, before High Heaven, to vow to you, my most beloved sovereign! unconditional and unlimited allegiance,

for life or death. Reject not my service, my Liege! unworthy as I am to offer it; and at least believe that could I have surmised to what ends would tend the factious and disloyal sentiments which my inexperience dignified by the name of patriotism, I had been the last man to join hand with those, whose late impious courses led your Majesty, in this morning's audience, to designate them as 'rebels!' Oh! wipe off the stain of such a term from the name of James of Montrose! Let his forgiveness but pass your sacred lips, and this broad realm holds not a heart so devoted to your service!"

Much moved by this address, to which the tone and manner of the Earl gave thrilling earnestness, Charles remained a short time silent. At length, he extended his hand towards the noble suppliant, saying, as he did so, in a voice which betrayed deep feeling, subdued only by a powerful effort,—

"We pardon thee, Montrose! as we ourselves hope to receive pardon from the Judge of all the earth;—and, as He asks but repentance, ill would it become us, invested but with His delegated power, to require more. In our heart, we

exonerate thee from the imputation of having ever intentionally harboured a rebellious thought. We believe that ‘through ignorance thou didst it.’ And most thankfully do we hail the day which has enabled us to rank the noblest of our enemies amongst the dearest of our friends. We require of thee no other security than—”

At this word, Montrose, who, still kneeling, had eagerly clasped the King’s hand, and pressed it to his lips during the foregoing speech, with a sudden impulse, started to his feet, saying, vehemently,—

“Than the honour of a gentleman, and,”—in a more subdued tone,—“than the word of a Christian,—I have no higher pledge to offer. And even now,” said he, as he once more bent the knee, and seized the hand still offered, “even now, sacred as is your Majesty’s right,—unquestionable the justice of your cause,—it was the right royal and noble nature, which could discern virtue even in an enemy, and the generous soul which knew not how to doubt its fellow, that brought Montrose to your Majesty’s feet.”

“Enough, my Lord !” said Charles. “We hold thee henceforth as our best and most devoted



friend; and God be thanked for this night's interview! In sooth, we were awaiting a visitor of a different kind, and even now we marvel at his delay."

"Meantime, my Liege, under your royal favour, I would communicate somewhat further to your private ear, if already I be not too tedious. At the risk of incurring your Majesty's suspicions that a paltry rivalry and personal animosity suggest the course I am about to take, in place of the pure and disinterested zeal for your Majesty's cause, which can be its only apology, I cannot leave this presence without denouncing as a traitor to his king and country, your Majesty's trusted adviser, James, Marquis of Hamilton!"

"And is it ever to be thus?" replied the King; "are our enemies to become friends but to prove our friends enemies? Montrose, believe us, Hamilton is true!—he has served us long and faithfully,—we cannot, will not, credit him a traitor!"

"My most honoured Sovereign! Think not that he who now pays you his debt of homage long withheld, would shadow your royal mind with a doubt regarding the faith of such a friend, could

he not, if needful, produce proofs of the fatal truth, ay, proofs as glaring as the noon-day sun. But here, alas! I must cast myself on your Majesty's forbearance, for there exist reasons, no less stringent, because too delicate for exposure; and which could yield in force only to your Majesty's command, or your Majesty's safety,—why I should not betray the confidence which put into my possession those damning proofs.”

Charles reflected for a few moments, and while he did so, something like a smile might have been observed to steal over his melancholy and thoughtful countenance. It might be that his dearly bought experience taught him to marvel at the simplicity of Montrose, in expecting that the King should take his own unsupported assurance to the ruin of his well known mortal enemy,—it might be that the name of Lord Hamilton's niece, coupled with that of the Earl of Montrose, had already reached the royal ear, and thus afforded the king a clue to his visitor's mysterious allusions which the other little suspected.

However this might be, there was a pause, and Charles was preparing once more to take up

the subject, when voices were heard in the ante-room,—the door opened, and Montrose instinctively retired into the embrasure of the deep south window already mentioned. When, however, he saw the slight figure of Albert Lyndesay enter the room, he again came forward. The youth started with evident surprise and confusion at recognising his fellow-traveller in the apartment where he had calculated on finding the king alone; but immediately recovering himself, with an easy grace which seemed natural to him, and which would have bespoken one rather habituated to a court than to a Highland fastness, he advanced and bent the knee before his sovereign.

Charles received his homage in silence, and the youth as he arose, cast an uneasy glance towards the Earl, apprehensive that the presence of the latter might disturb the purpose of his errand. Montrose understood the look, and immediately held out his hand.

“On a former occasion, good youth, thou wert slow in trusting me. In the presence of the Majesty of England, may I hope to inspire thee with more confidence?”

Albert accepted the proffered hand, but only

replied with a look of appeal towards the King. "His Majesty's will alone directs me; in whom he bids me confide I confide with heart and soul, —whom he bids me doubt, I doubt."

The features of Charles, at these simple words, were lighted for an instant with one of those radiant smiles that reflect upon an habitually sad expression the transient gladness which glows in a heart worn with the world's cold and selfish policy, when on occasions the freshness of youthful, or of devoted, feeling, exhibits itself. He gave his hand to be pressed to the lips of his youthful adherent, and said in a tone almost paternal,—

"Then now we bid thee trust,—brave boy, thou hast our warrant for this gentleman's honour. Doubtless thou hast heard of the great and gallant Earl of Montrose as hostile to us? Henceforth learn to regard him as our most precious and inestimable ally."

"And is it even so? Now Heaven be praised!" said Albert, as he turned eagerly towards Montrose. "And you, my Lord, whose name for valour and prowess I have so long admired,—whose genius I have almost worshipped,—I see

you, and may love you, and yet be loyal. A proud day it will be for Scotland when her noblest chieftain stands forth the champion of truth and justice! Let us but utter the name of Montrose as our watchword, and faction will be quelled, and rebellion will cease!"

As Albert gave vent to this burst of joyous enthusiasm at discovering the acquisition of so great an ally to the party in which all his hopes were centred, the King and the Earl, with the calm and indulgent interest of experience, regarded his youthful face, flashing with sudden hope and ardour. Montrose, however, interrupted him,—

"Softly, my good youth," said he. "With regard to the publicity of this night's events, thy expectations are, for the present at least I fear, doomed to be disappointed. I was about to propose to his Majesty, as the best means of serving his interests, that as yet all parties should be kept in ignorance of the part which in honour and conscience I feel bound to take in this great struggle. Should your Majesty vouchsafe to approve this suggestion," continued the Earl, addressing himself to Charles, "I will remain with

the Scottish army, and there use whatever influence I may possess in promoting your Majesty's interests, by moderating the inflated sentiments of the really deluded multitude, and by counter-acting to the utmost of my power the designs and purposes of the deluding few. By this means I may for the present gain far more to the royal cause than by the provocation of an open hostility. But some envoy of unquestioned faith must be established between us."

"Would that I might be he!" thought Albert, as with the impetuous anxiety of a child waiting a parent's sanction to some favourite scheme of pleasure, he tried to detect in the expression of the monarch's countenance his approbation or disapproval of the plan proposed.

It was long before Charles answered. At length he said, "Believe not that any want of trust in thy faith and loyalty induces us to hesitate in this matter—but truly, Montrose, there appeared to us something of treachery in inviting the confidence of any party only to betray it——"

Charles would have proceeded—but the Earl interrupted him, forgetful of the form which

should have kept him silent. The quick blood mounted to his cheeks and brow, and his proud eye flashed as he exclaimed—

“Betray!—my Liege—betray!—not the very devil if he trusted in me! I but proposed——”

The King waived his hand. “We know what thou wouldest say,” he calmly resumed; “thou wilt reveal nought of their counsels—and we were about to add, that we also ourselves having weighed this, do conscientiously acquit the proposal of any implication of betrayal of trust. In times of extremity the Holy Scripture itself affords us examples of the employment of extreme means. Considering, therefore, that our subjects have been induced by false representations to lift up their hands in treasonable war, in aid of a rebellion which against an anointed sovereign must ever be a grievous sin—with the knowledge also that *ambition* is the root, and *power* the anticipated fruit, where *patriotism* appears as the flower—with the firm intention moreover, by the help of God, that clemency shall be extended to all who may see their error—we give thee, Graham of Montrose, our warrant to act as best befitteth thy prudence and judgment, in aid of our cause,

amongst the Scottish army or elsewhere—appointing thee, Albert Lyndesay, to fill the post of messenger between this noble gentleman and ourselves. Already thou hast proved thy fitness for the trust in the act of service this day rendered to us; and though we now appoint thee to a post of risk and danger—God forgive us if we err!—but it must not be in a vulgar cause that the blood which flows in thy veins——”

Abruptly Charles checked himself, as if seized by a sudden recollection, whilst Lyndesay, who had been hanging with intense earnestness on every word that dropped from his lips, eagerly said,—

“My Liege!”

“Go to,” said the King, hastily, “we were forgetting thou didst say this morning thou wert but the adopted of Lord Gordon; but time wears, and our memory fails us. Montrose, we gladly await thy tidings; and in token of our love we pray thee to accept this sword, bequeathed to us by our royal father,\* and hitherto wielded by our

\* This sword, bequeathed by James I. to his son, and presented by Charles I. to the Earl of Montrose, was placed by Walter Scott, with great delight, amongst the antiquarian treasures of Abbotsford.—See Lockhart, letter to James Baillie.



own hand, but which will serve us, we doubt not, more worthily in thine. Lyndesay, we rely on thy vigilance and zeal, and to both we wish good night."

Charles hastily rose, and was preparing to leave the room, when Albert, recovering from the state of bewilderment into which the King's seeming allusion to his own personal history had thrown him, importunately, yet respectfully, entreated him to stay.

"One word more, with all humility, my Royal Master," said the youth. "I came here to communicate to your Majesty what this unexpected meeting has caused yet to be left unsaid; and what I have to tell is indeed fitted for no ears but those of your Majesty, and of such as share your secret counsels, though even of such, alas! I have to speak. Pardon me, sire, if to make my story intelligible, I must needs dwell somewhat on events in my own insignificant life. Your Majesty is aware that of my family and birth-place, I know nothing."

Albert paused, for he observed the tightly compressed lips and steady gaze of Charles, and was fearful that he had offended. The King,

however, apparently by an effort, smiled faintly, but encouragingly, and bade him to proceed. Accordingly he resumed.—

“ Until the death of my patron and benefactor, I was unconscious of any anxiety respecting my own history. One being alone is associated with my early recollections as having conveyed to my mind some vague idea of a mystery attending myself. She was a poor and miserable woman, pretending at times to the gift of soothsaying; and twice during my childhood I was committed to her charge on the occasion of some trifling malady, and, accompanied by her as my nurse, was taken on a journey of considerable length from the princely mansion I was accustomed to consider my home. These two visits (for we became inmates in another family during our absence) are indelibly stamped on my memory; as it was then that I received all the kindness and affection to which elsewhere I had been a stranger, for it was the kindness and affection of *a woman*. She was young and beautiful,—alas! not many days since I saw her portrait, if ever canvass told true!—and she wept when she was forced to part with me;—but I

returned, still ignorant of my fate, to the protection of the Marquis of Gordon.

“Enough of this! I will not dwell upon the contrast between the caprice of an old man and the tender interest of a gentle woman. Pardon me, Sire, once more, this tedious detail. Ninon (for that was her name) again appeared to me when I about to lose my protector, and she first communicated to me the appalling truth that I had no claims upon the Marquis’s family, of which his death would not deprive me: accident alone having originally directed his whimsical partiality towards me. Stung by this intelligence, and failing in every effort to extract from Ninon further information on all that interested me most, I waited but to receive the last breath of my benefactor, ere I put in execution the resolution instantly formed, of entreating your Majesty graciously to dispose of my person and poor services. On my way to England, I halted for the night at a small inn on the borders, (the same where first I was honoured with the sight of the noble Earl of Montrose,) and there again, to my astonishment, I was met by the woman Ninon. And now, my Liege, comes the fact which

has rendered this poor worthless history essential. At once guessing my destination, she committed to me a packet to convey to your Majesty, and hurried my departure on the very hour. The parcel contained, as she affirmed, letters of traitorous import for a subject to receive; addressed by the Cardinal de Richelieu to your Majesty's trusted counsellor, the Marquis of Hamilton. Your Majesty will conceive that my surprise amounted to incredulity, as but short time since I was witness of the Lord Hamilton's fidelity to your Majesty's interests, when attending my chief at Edinburgh. Ninon, however, persisted in her declaration, and bade me read the letters, as I am led to think she herself had done"—

"And you did so?" said Charles, hastily.

"Sire, no!" replied the youth. "My duty was to submit them to your Majesty's disposal,—not to seek information in so questionable a manner for myself. In the hope of accomplishing this, I hastened onwards, but the attempt was fruitless. In a word, I was pursued, taken at disadvantage, with unequal odds, wounded, robbed of these despatches, and—forgive me for mentioning it—of a personal relic I valued nearly as much, and

left for dead. And all which now remains in my power, is to warn your Majesty of the existence of these papers, and bitterly to lament that I have failed in the service of laying at your Majesty's feet proofs which might satisfy the doubts my unsupported assertion must leave."

During the foregoing recital, both the King and the Earl had listened with breathless attention, and their eyes had often met. When, at length, it was concluded, Charles bent his head upon his hand, and sighing deeply, ejaculated, rather in soliloquy than as addressed to any one—

"Saville this morning!—Hamilton to-night!—where is suspicion to end?"

For some time he remained buried in thought, and the silence continued unbroken. At length, raising his head, he gravely bowed an adieu to each Cavalier, as he waived his hand in token of his wish to be left alone.

Before the morrow's dawn, Montrose and Albert Lyndesay were on their way to join the Scottish camp at Newcastle.

## CHAPTER XV.

He knew himself a villain—but he deemed  
The rest no better than the thing he seemed ;  
And scorned the best as hypocrites, who hid  
Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.  
He knew himself detested—but he knew,  
The hearts that loathed him, crouched and dreaded too.  
Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt,  
From all affection, and from all contempt.—CORSAIR.

OUR readers may perhaps remember, what Albert Lyndesay, in the exciting events of his sojourn at York, had entirely forgotten, namely—that besides the letter which the “open sessima” of his saddle had so opportunely put into his possession, and which had caused, as we have seen, no inconsiderable sensation in the King’s Council—that same depositary contained other papers, on the first glance apparently of small

importance, and as such recommitted to their hiding-place by Lyndesay, who entirely forgot their existence until long time afterwards, when the leisure and ennui of a military camp induced him to examine them. But as we are not bound to refrain from their perusal as long as he did, we will take the opportunity of the present pause in our narrative to introduce them to our readers. They were addressed in epistolary form to some person whose name was always a blank in the manuscript, thus affording no clue to the author's associates. They commenced abruptly as follows:—

“ Often, ——, you have asked me why I would peril body and soul in this accursed struggle, wherein I, a foreigner, and therefore careless as to the fate of England; an infidel, and therefore indifferent as to the triumph of Rome or Edinburgh, can have no concern. The motives which have animated me, the unextinguishable impulse which has urged me on, could not have stirred your thick northern blood. You play the game (how much more meritorious than my own?) of a party which talks of *principles*: I have no other stake than *passions*. First comes *revenge*—

and if you would ask its object, I must enumerate all with whom I have yet held intercourse; for from every man who has crossed my path I have received bitter injury, or, what was worse, silent contumely. Hunted down by the whole human race, I have turned to bay. But there is still another passion which animates me to grapple with the monster Fate, in the desperate hope that some of her struggles may throw its object into my power. This passion is—nay, smile not——, it is *love*—or what would be called such in another—in me, degraded and despised, it is but madness. You might, perhaps, imagine that such a sentiment would soften the heart, instead of steeling it—know, then, that she, whom, spite of all the obstacles of power, and rank, and station, I am resolved to possess or to perish, exists in a sphere so exalted that she would spurn me as the worm beneath her feet, and only the total extinction of all order can throw her in my path. Yet have I too gentle blood, and once or twice, in early youth, it spoke within me in loftier aspirations. But they died away under the pressure of a cruel destiny, and the sight of that young maiden elicited the last spark from the smouldering fire



which glowed within my veins. Now listen to my story.—

“ I was born in Paris, in a melancholy apartment in the Rue St. Jacques; and I have been informed that my mother, who died at my birth, was an Italian lady of great beauty, and of a family far from ignoble. She left me, however, no other name than that of the locality in which I was born, and accordingly that distinctive appellation was adopted. Supplied with the scantiest means of subsistence during my infancy and boyhood, from some untraceable source, and placed, as I grew older, at a college of Dominicans distant from the capital, enough of my mother’s blood flowed in my veins to suggest dark thoughts against the unknown betrayer of her peace, who had seduced her from an honourable home (for so much I had gathered from those around me) to leave her to perish in a foreign city, without friends or attendants, and almost destitute of the necessities of life. I resolved to seek out the author of so much misery, as soon as I should have the command of my own actions; for, in addition to my mother’s wrongs, the constant brooding over my own desolate lot wrought in me a sense of deep hatred

against one who had consigned me to an existence so wretched and friendless.

“ Thus my youth was passed in a sullen submission to injuries, with a restless desire after revenge. The power which detained me at the Dominican college was great; for though I had attained an age when it was usual to go out into the world, I still found myself a prisoner. Undoubtedly the controller of my fate was a Churchman.

“ But the worst blow remained behind. Spite of my protestations of unfitness and abhorrence,— spite of opposition desperate almost to madness,— the frock and cowl of the order were forced upon me; and I became, in seeming at least, a Dominican monk. But neither art nor force could extort from me the utterance of the more stringent vows, for then I had not become totally unscrupulous. I was, therefore, as the fraternity knew, bound to them only so long as they could detain me a captive; and accordingly no persecution was left untried to draw from my lips the oaths of celibacy, solitude, &c. Thus goaded into a resolution to obtain my liberty, by whatever means, I sought, and at length found, opportunity of escape, from the convent. The enterprise was,

of course, attended with danger,—but I spare you the details.—I proceeded to Paris, the scene of my earliest impressions, and there I left no measures untried to discover the secret of my parentage, but without success.

“Poverty succeeded, and abject want; and I was forced to betake myself to some calling as a means of subsistence.

“You know that at this time the Cardinal de Richelieu ruled France, (as still he does,) in the name of the King; and his iron sway was in a great measure supported by a system of espionage, which was maintained through a regularly organised and well paid body of informers. In fact, the most valuable possession a man could boast in these times was a secret of some importance, which might affect the state.

“By great good luck I had almost in my infancy become the possessor of such an one, the revelation of which I hoped might serve me with the minister. I determined to obtain an introduction to him by means of it, and to seek a livelihood in that line of life for which my late inquisitorial researches on my own behalf, and a tolerable knowledge of languages gained at the

college, together with the natural bias of my character, eminently fitted me.

“At the period of which I speak, the public attention had been excited by the extinction of the great house of d’Amville in the male line, through the death of the last Duke. And as the depression of this noble family had been one great object of the policy of Richelieu, and the last possessor of its honours the especial subject of his persecution and hatred, it was considered a signal triumph for the minister that no heir to those honours survived.

“Since the people always eagerly canvass what appertains to the great, some observations to this effect had reached my ears; and the name of d’Amville suddenly awakened in me the recollection of a scene so faintly portrayed in my memory that I had difficulty in recalling it, and arranging the circumstances with any precision.

“When quite a boy I had been placed under the guardianship of a Priest, who from his extreme wretchedness and poverty was glad of the small pittance my maintenance afforded him; and who made use of the scanty strength I possessed in the most degrading offices. This man had fre-

quent interviews with a woman, whose name I never knew, but whose personal attractions, in the style of beauty peculiar to the peasantry of her native Provence, were, as far as I remember, great. She was married, as I one day heard Father Bartolemeo assert, to a soldier in the Scottish guard. Be that as it may, her demeanour towards the Priest was that of a person urging earnestly upon another the performance of some service to which he had great reluctance, and at times her manner almost took the tone of command; but I comprehended nothing of the purport of her mysterious visits.

“At length the promise of gold, as I think, prevailed, and one night Bartolemeo accompanied this person, taking me to act as sacristan, to the church of St. Germain des Près. It was near midnight, and the dark and gloomy building struck a chill to the heart as we paced along the vaulted aisles, lighted only by the faint lamp which was carried by the female who guided us. In traversing the space between the choir and the chapel of the Virgin, suddenly a bright light shone upon the pavement a little distance before us. It proceeded from a small chapel to the right, and on arriving

opposite to this brilliantly illuminated recess, what was my surprise on beholding there three gay Cavaliers, all young, and habited in the gorgeous costume of the period. One of these was seated when we entered, a rich velvet chair having been brought from the choir for his use, whilst the other two remained standing before him. They appeared full of mirth, and in the highest spirits, and on our arrival were recovering from the effects of some jest, of which we of course remained in ignorance. In fact, their whole demeanour was that of gay companions in a frolicsome revel, rather than that of men assembled in a church in mystery and darkness, for the purpose, as our attendance seemed to denote, of taking part in some religious ceremony.

“The Cavalier who was seated appeared less inclined to give way to this exuberant frivolity than his companions; and to him the others paid a degree of deference, though of what passed between them I was entirely ignorant, as it was spoken in a foreign language, which I now believe to have been English. The splendour of this person's dress outshone anything I ever have seen, either before or since; every part of it was fastened by

jewels of immense value. His countenance I recollect but indistinctly.

“ All these observations I made during the time we afterwards had to wait, for on our entrance few words were interchanged, and Bartolemeo, with myself, proceeded to arrange the small altar for the mass; the woman who had guided us thither leaving the chapel almost instantly. She was absent about ten minutes, during which time all present remained in silence; when at length footsteps were again heard on the marble pavement, and the woman returned, accompanied by another female, as it seemed, but the figure was muffled in a large cloak and veil.

“ One of the Cavaliers advanced eagerly to meet them, and, leading the stranger forward, he hastily removed her mantle and veil, and discovered to view one of the most exquisitely lovely forms that nature ever produced.

“ She was young; yet there was a majesty in her step and in her bearing, that seemed at once to check the levity which had prevailed before her approach, and to restore to this meeting whatever it had lacked of decent reverence and propriety. Her soft dark eyes sought the

ground, as, with a bend of profound respect, she acknowledged a complimentary greeting from the Cavalier who held the place of honour; and if her cheek then crimsoned, a moment afterwards it was paler than her robe of spotless white which flowed in folds upon the pavement, as the Cavalier who had first saluted her, seizing her hand, impatiently led her to the altar.

“ I was much and childishly surprised to find that the individual who seemed first in rank was not the bridegroom; and more so to observe that, though decidedly handsomer in person than the other two, the happy possessor of such a bride was by far the least distinguished in dress.

“ The service commenced at a sign from the other female, who appeared to be an attendant on the lady. Curious as I was to hear the names, the English or *Scotch* (if the tartan scarf he wore spoke true,) title of the bridegroom escaped me; but my ears, already accustomed to the pronunciation of the other name, easily retained that of Isabelle Claude Marguerite d’Amville.

“ At the sound of her own name, echoing through the dreary fabric at such an hour, and in such a scene, the lady started and looked fearfully



round, but her lover whispered courage ; and after a few tears of agitated feeling, she received from him the ring which bound her to him for ever. The other Cavalier, of whom I have said nothing, but who was remarkable for the extreme gaiety and animation of his demeanour, officiated as father in the ceremony ; and the female attendant assisted him to hold over the now united pair the nuptial canopy, as they knelt to receive the benediction.

“ I knew not then what I have since learned, that the possibility of the birth of a male heir to the house of d'Amville, even through a female branch, was an event which the whole policy of the wily priest, then gaining power in the state, and high in credit with the King, was bent to counteract,—a great part of the wealth of that house passing by inheritance unconditionally in the female line, and, what was still more odious to Richelieu, the title of *Count*, though not that of Duke, descending to the *male* descendant of a sister or niece, *if born in France*. It was with the title, and in it the nobility of the family that the state waged war, as I afterwards learned when, at the death of the last Duke, men can-

vassed the matter. Its greatness had been an object of jealousy, and its extinction had been decreed in the secret councils of the minister; and thus a marriage of any of its members, even with a *compatriot*, would have deeply offended the Court; with a *foreigner*, if discovered, would doubtless bring ruin and destruction on both the contracting parties.

“ But to return to a scene in which ignorance and stupid wonder then alone stimulated my curiosity. When the ceremony was ended, a solemn oath was taken by all present except myself, (then considered too young and too ignorant for betrayal,) the purport of which was, as far as I remember, never to divulge what had that night passed, but of this I am not sure. My memory recalls more clearly, however, the vision of the splendid offerings made by each of the party when I handed round the plate, as is customary on such occasions, for the maintenance of the church. After this all parties signed their names on some written document, distinct from the customary entries in the register of the church; and this deed was placed in the hands of the young Cavalier, who appeared to hold the place of dignity. In

return he presented to the lovely bride a marriage gift. It was a magnificent jewel formed of brilliants, the device of which he appeared to explain to her with some care. I should recognise that gem if I saw it again. . . . .

“Scarcely were these courtesies concluded, when suddenly, from the adjacent convent, there arose the sound of the midnight chimes; and the sweet voices of the nuns engaged in their holy service, might have shed a soothing influence on spirits even more excited than those assembled in that lonely chapel. It was not thus, however.

“As if roused by that sound to some agonising recollection, the beautiful bride uttered a shriek, which to my latest moment I can never forget, and fainted in her husband’s arms. The Priest, as he looked on her, seemed all at once seized by some dreadful suggestion, for his countenance became deadly pale, and its expression changed from low cunning to mortal fear and hatred. His lips quivered, as, seizing the arm of the female attendant with a violent grasp, he said, in a tone almost sepulchral, ‘Was she the bride of Heaven?’ at the same instant extinguishing the lights, in order to render escape impossible to

those unaccustomed to the church, in case his worst fears should be realised.

“Tearing herself from his gripe, the woman retreated a few paces, and then, in a tone which rang through every vault of that sacred pile, she rather screamed than spoke the words,—

“‘Not till to-morrow.—Englishmen, follow me.’

“Apparently the truth of her reply was undoubted; for the priest, with a muttered oath, turned away without attempting violence, and as he listened to the retreating footsteps of the Cavaliers bearing away their almost lifeless burden, under the guidance of this woman, who seemed perfectly familiar with the place; I trembled at his anathemas, and the dark threats which escaped his lips. I have since concluded that he made no effort at detaining any of the party, as the *éclat* of an open rupture would have been dangerous to himself, he having become liable to the Church’s censures, for his agency in the marriage of one designed for the Cloister.

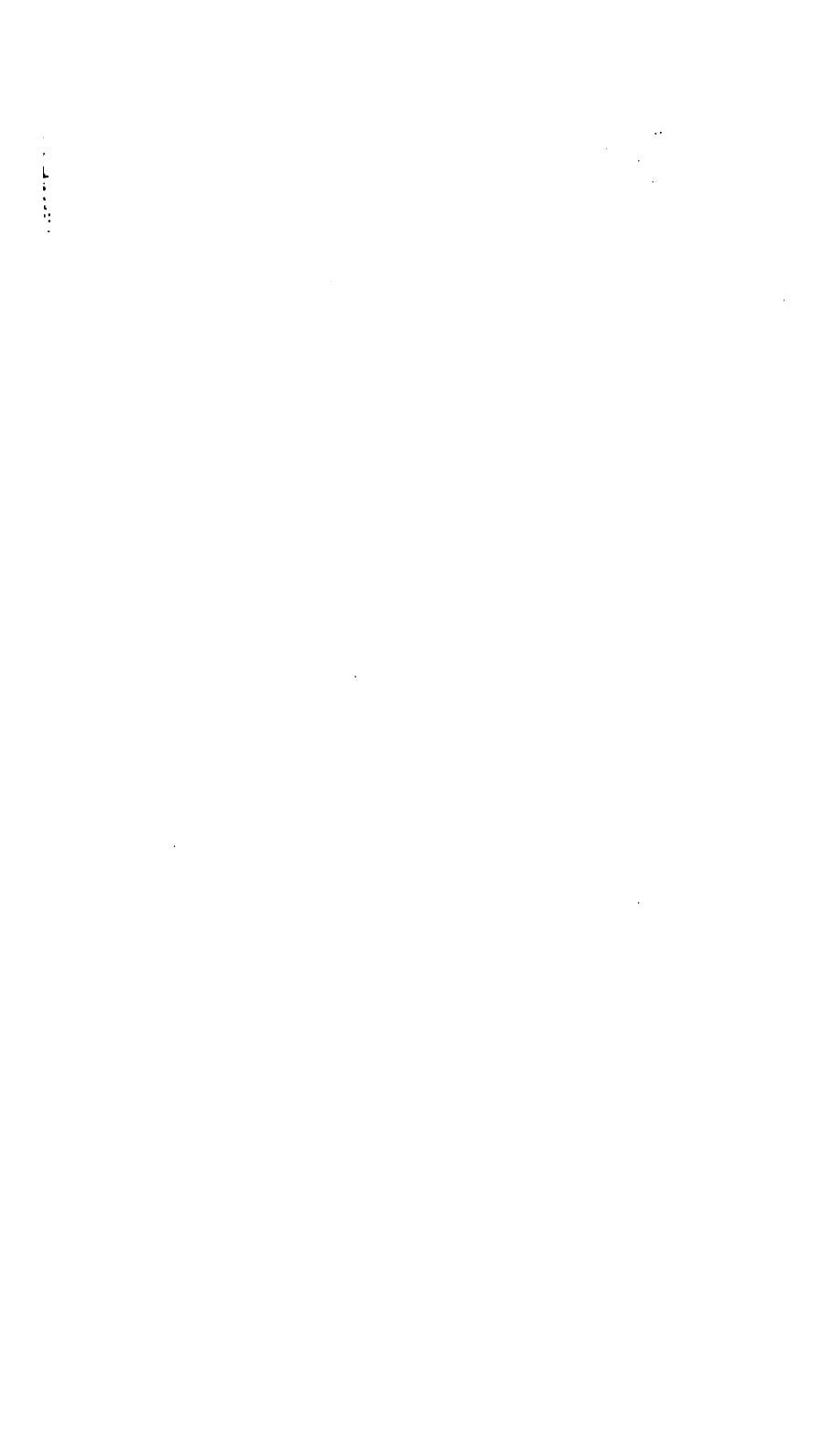
“He took no further notice of what had occurred; probably hoping, that the whole affair might

pass into oblivion; and I, on my part, soon ceased to think of it at all. But the vengeance of the Church did not sleep.—When was Rome ever known to spare? When was Richelieu ever induced to relent?”

END OF VOL. I.

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